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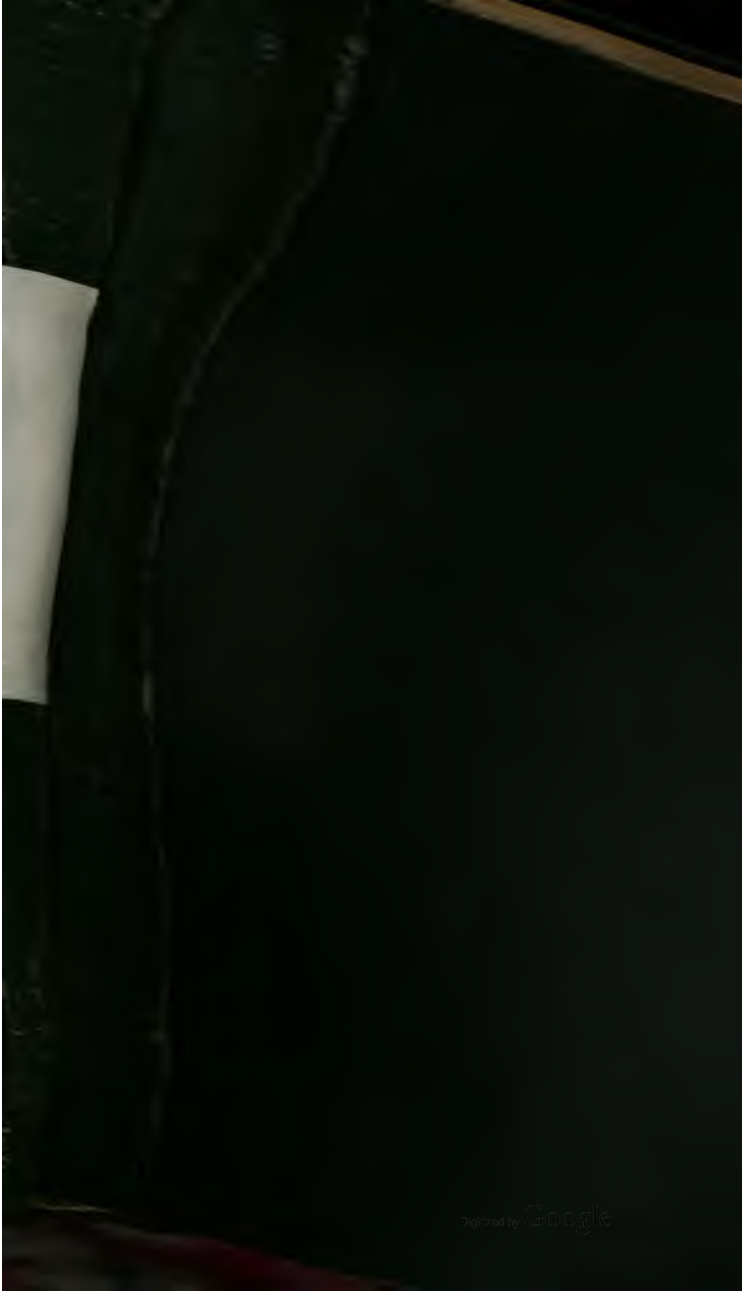
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The Boa Constrictor seizing a Tiger.

# TRAVELS IN AFRICA,

PERFORMED BY

SILVESTER MEINRAD XAVIER GOLBERRY,

IN THE

*Western Parts of that vast Continent:*

CONTAINING

VARIOUS IMPORTANT DISCOVERIES, WITH A PARTICULAR ACCOUNT OF THE

| | |
|---|---|
| Situation | Fisheries |
| Extent | Trade |
| Towns | Commerce |
| Rivers | Agriculture |
| Lakes | Curiosities |
| Mines | Religion |
| Minerals | Natural History, and |

*The internal Government, both Civil and Military, of the various Kingdoms and Nations; together with an Account of the*

DISCOVERY OF EXTENSIVE GOLD MINES.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH, BY

W. MUDFORD, ESQ.

Author of "A Critical Inquiry into the Writings of Dr. Johnson," &c. &c. &c.

*Embellished with MAPS, PLANS, and ENGRAVINGS, illustrative of the Country.*

VOL. I.

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1808.

RHODES HOUSE
OXFORD
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# THE AUTHOR's PREFACE.

THE English took from us the Senegal during the war of seven years, and were confirmed in the possession of it by the unhappy peace of 1763.

In 1779, Messieurs de Vaudreuil and de Lausun tore this conquest from Great Britain; and possessing greater firmness at the peace of 1783, than we did in 1763, we were once more acknowledged as the masters of this ancient possession of France.

The government of the Senegal was then re-established, but not indeed as it ought to have been; it should certainly have been extended from Cape Blanco, on the coast of Barbary, to Cape Palmas; and it is the more to be regretted, that our right to traffic freely the whole of this extent, was not then more forcibly maintained, and more clearly stipulated, inasmuch as our commercial concerns, on the coasts of Africa, will be found so intimately connected with the in-



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terests of our fine colonies in America, and the establishment of that grand and fertile country, known by the appellation of French Guayana.

Every one who directed their attention towards political economy, our enlightened merchants, and our learned men, were then principally interested with regard to Africa; the one in relation to the enlargement of our commerce, and the increase of our wealth; the others, and indeed all those who felt an interest in the progress of human knowledge, because they had long been impatient to attain some information respecting a part of the globe, which, though very near us, though as it were under the eyes and hand of Europe, though inhabited in all its extent, yet had, for more than thirty centuries, been in a state of obscurity and insignificance.

At the moment when the peace of 1783 re-established us in the exclusive possession of the Senegal, a cloud of darkness yet hung over all the interior countries of this continent.

I was one of those who thought that the free and independent possession of one of the greatest rivers in Africa, gave to France additional facility to penetrate into the central regions; and that, from our situation in the Senegal, to us, peculiarly belonged the honour, of dispersing that cloud, and of teaching Europe the secrets of Africa.

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Four years had we already been re-possessed of this river, and nothing yet seemed to intimate that France would engage herself in these great objects of interest and curiosity; and this indifference appeared still more remarkable, as our rivals the English, had just gained a vast accession of glory, from the last voyages of Captain Cook.

This intrepid and celebrated navigator had resolved many important questions. Having approached nearer to the South Pole than any of his predecessors, and discovered that beneath it the globe is invaded by ice, even to the seventy-second degree of South latitude, he at once destroyed those prejudices which had been so long entertained, with regard to the existence of a *terra australis incognita*.

It is to him therefore we owe our present perfect knowledge of the South Sea; and it may easily be conceived, that if he left any islands for his successors to discover, they were but of subordinate importance.

He also ascertained the separation of Asia from America, and specified the situation and extent of the canal which divides these two parts of the world, but which nevertheless are found to be so approximate, that the natives of either coast can have communication with each other by means of canoes.



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Cook had therefore appropriated to his country an important part of the glory attached to the geographical discoveries of the last century, and this celebrated man had, as it were, bounded the limits of the greatest circumnavigations.

These advantages which England possessed over us, should have excited the emulation of France, to whom, her establishments in Africa, and some very favourable local circumstances, presented the most eligible opportunities, and the most important means, of attaining considerable discoveries in the interior of this continent.

1. Sole masters of the Senegal, which we ascend even to the cataract of the rock Felow; an establishment founded at Galam, to which we might give great power; a very extensive influence, and by means of which we might progressively establish ourselves in the country of Bambouk, and proceed even to Tombouctou and Tocrrur.

2. The tranquillity, the safety, the secrecy of all our enterprizes in this river; the too much neglected right of navigating in those of Salum, of the Gambia, of Casamanca, of St. Domingo, of Rio Grande (Great River) of Nuno Tristo, of Sierra Leona of Scherbroo, and of Cestos; our connection with the Moors of Zaara; our ascendancy over many great kingdoms of Western Africa; and lastly, our social qualities, which in-

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spire these African nations with a natural affection for us; do not all these form an immense resource of means, by which to penetrate into the very heart of Africa? And yet France remained indifferent to all these exalted and noble enterprizes, of which every thing promised success.

In 1785, M. de Boufflers, with whom various circumstances had connected me, was appointed Governor of the Senegal; he proposed to me to accompany him thither; I was then Captain of the *Corps de Genie*.

I requested of the Marechal de Castries, minister of marine, and of the Marechal de Segur, minister of war, permission to go to Africa: M. de Boufflers requested it also; and I seized with great avidity so favourable an occasion, to judge myself either of those difficulties which had for so many centuries impeded our knowledge of the interior of this continent; or of the advantages which might be possessed, for making new discoveries; and, without stipulating any thing for my own individual advantage, I proceeded to the Senegal with M. de Boufflers as his first aide-du-camp, instructed at the same time, to perform the functions of chief engineer of the whole of this government, and appointed to reconnoitre that part of it which was formed by the western and maritime countries.



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No man could carry into Africa more liberal intentions, or views more pure and noble, than did M. de Boufflers. The two other principal chiefs of the government of the Senegal were equally distinguished and estimable from their experience, their talents, their character, and their integrity; and the most happy consequences might have been expected from such an union, if the then minister had been more favourable. But they were not at Versailles persuaded of the importance which the government of the Senegal might acquire: they thought enough was done, in permitting it to exist; nor did they furnish those means, to attain to that influence which they might possess over Africa.

The observations which I made in 1786, upon the western countries, entirely convinced me of what I had long before conjectured; namely, that the government of the Senegal might procure to France the greatest and most brilliant advantages.

According to the instructions which were given me, I was to observe every thing which might be of advantage to our commerce; to note likewise, the situation of the English commerce, as well as that of the Portugueze; to negotiate with various negro kings, if it appeared necessary, for the establishment of new factories; to discontinue such as might appear superfluous; examine

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all the parts which were capable of a military force, and ascertain every thing which might preserve and augment their means of resistance; and in short to make every possible observation with regard to the countries subjected to the government of the Senegal, or under its influence.

This mission so exactly agreed with the desire which I felt to collect some knowledge of Africa, and, in every point of view, presented so many new objects of instruction, observation, and curiosity, that I devoted myself to it, with equal zeal and pleasure, and I felt no other regret than that of being compelled to execute it so rapidly.

The voyages which it occasioned, and the residence which I made in many of the principal countries of that part of Western Africa, contained between Cape Blanco and Cape Palmas, have enabled me to become acquainted with a very considerable portion of this continent, and which I have since made my particular study.

I have seen and conversed with the individuals of twenty different black nations, and I have made numberless observations; all the data that I have collected, the documents and memoirs which I have received from the English of the Gambia and the Sierra Leona; those which M. de Repentigny, former Governor of the Senegal,

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very kindly gave me; other communications also, and likewise my own researches in this part of the world, about which I have been unceasingly employed since my return to France, have formed the materials of a very minute work; a work which demonstrates what, in 1787, *was*, that part of Western Africa, then known by the appellation of the Government of the Senegal, what it *might* be, if encouraged by government, and the resources which those countries subjected to the Senegal, might afford, in supplying the immense losses, which have been the result of a too precipitate resolution, of abolishing in one day the slavery and the slave trade of the Africans.

It presents an account of the commercial situation of the French, the English, and the Portugueze in this part of the world, during the years 1785, 1786, 1787; some reflections on the state, the force, and the means of defence of the Senegal, of Goree, of Fort James, of Fort Bence in the river of Sierra Leona, and some other ports situated on the banks of the Senegal. Some observations on the quartering and the preservation of the troops employed in these parts, and more particularly with regard to the protection of the countries immediately concerned; on the relations which the government

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of the Senegal might establish with the surrounding African nations, and even with those in the interior of this continent.

Researches into the ancient æras of this part of Africa, as well as the history, polity, situation, character, manners, customs, habits, and industry of these various people.

Descriptions of the countries which they inhabit, and of many very interesting scites which may vie in beauty and in ornament with the most delicious landscapes in Europe: some observations on the disposition which may be found in these western nations, towards civilization, and how this project should be conducted.

The accounts thus given of this part of Africa will be sufficient to render it well known; and questions on geography, on the climate, meteors, on the diseases of this part of the world, and on the presumptive population of it, will of course be found included.

Convinced that a traveller possesses a right to speak of every thing which has made a powerful impression upon himself, some chapters on Natural History form a part of the work.

Africa offers to the historian of nature and its productions an immense road. On the banks of the Senegal, the Gambia, and the Sierra Leona, we behold the enormous elephant, which the inhabitant of this part of Africa knows only to assassinate; unconscious he, how to tame or to

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subdue; innumerable troops of these stupendous animals often walk free and peaceable together, unless intercepted; but at the approach of man, they fly, and seek their solitary forests, which are at once their abode and their asylum.

Near Podhor, in the Senegal, are seen many hippopotami; and when this animal rears its enormous head above the waters of the river, he inspires at once fear and admiration.

It is impossible to judge either of the size or grandeur of the hippopotamus, from that which is seen in the National Museum of Natural History at Paris, as it had not reached its full age; those which live on the borders, and in the waters of the Senegal, are monstrous.

In 1786, the Mulatto Charles Cornier, Mayor of the town of St. Louis of the Senegal, gave me the head of a hippopotamus; it was one of the greatest that I had ever seen; though dry, it measured more than three feet in length, and almost as many broad; the proboscis was twenty-two inches long from the socket, and twelve in circumference; the snout measured fourteen inches in length from the alveolus, and nine in circumference. From this description, the reader may form some idea of the size and projection of the lips which cover these enormous tusks.

There does not pass a year, during which the negroes do not kill twenty or thirty of these animals, either with the fusil or with arrows, and

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the facility with which the skeletons and skins of them might hence be preserved, would enable the government to enrich the National Museum of France with one of this species in its most gigantic dimensions. The negroes also catch these animals alive; by making a ditch in the path which they are accustomed to pursue, either when they emerge from the water, or when they return to it, these monsters fall into the snare, and are destroyed with balls and arrows.

Sometimes they surprise the females who come to lay their calves; they kill the mother, and thus possess themselves of the calf, which they eat; it would therefore be possible to procure live hippopotami, or their calves, which might be reared by letting them, during the first months, draw the teats of a strong cow; and Paris might then one day see, what formerly Rome, then the capital of the world, twice beheld in her public spectacles, living hippopotami. *

The lion, fierce native of these burning climes, inspires rather pleasure than fear. I have twice admired his noble and majestic walk; and I am convinced that he will not attack a number of men together, but rather avoid them; without

* Pliny, Book VII. and Dion Cassius, Book II.

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however hastening his step, or depreciating his dignity; his character admits prudence, and his courage is neither rash nor intemperate.

The hideous crocodile, the serpent, named by the negroes of Sierra Leona, Tennuy, and by our naturalists Boa Contrictor,* which is thirty feet in length, and whose body acquires such dimensions as to swallow an ox entire; the cameleon,

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* This is an immense animal, and often exceeds thirty-six feet in length. The body is very thick, of a dusky colour, and its back is interspersed with twenty-four large irregular spots; the tail is of a darker colour: and the sides are beautifully variegated with pale spots. Besides, the whole body is interspersed with small brown spots. The head is covered with small scales, and has no broad laminæ betwixt the eyes, but has a black belt behind the eyes. It wants the large dog fangs, and of course its bite is not poisonous. The tongue is fleshy, and forked; above the eyes, on each side, the head rises high. The scales of this serpent are all very small, roundish, and smooth. The tail does not exceed one-eighth of the whole length of the animal. Piso, Margraave, and Kempfer, give the following account of its method of living and catching its prey.

"It frequents caves and thick forests, where it conceals itself, and suddenly darts out upon strangers,

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the history of which is yet unknown; the enormous tree by the Iolofs called Baobab, and

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wild beasts, &c. When it chooses a tree for its watching place, it supports itself by twisting its tail round the trunk or a branch, and darts down upon sheep, goats, tigers, or any animal that comes within its reach. When it lays hold of animals, especially any of the larger kind, it twists itself several times round their body, and by the vast force of its circular muscles, bruises and breaks all their bones. After the bones are broken, it licks the skin of the animal all over, besmearing it with a gelatinous kind of saliva. This operation is intended to facilitate deglutition, and is a preparation for swallowing the whole animal. If it be a stag, or any horned animal, it begins to swallow the feet first, and gradually sucks in the body, and last of all the head. When the horns happen to be large, this serpent has been observed, with the horns of a stag sticking out from its mouth. As the animal digests, the horns putrify, and fall off. After this serpent has swallowed a stag or a tiger, it is unable for some days to move; the hunters, who are well acquainted with this circumstance, always take this opportunity to destroy it. When irritated, it makes a loud hissing noise. This serpent is said to cover itself over with leaves in such places as stags or other animals frequent, in order to conceal itself from their sight, and that it may more



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which we improperly denominate ape's bread This tree attains to such an immeasurable size, that I have seen one in the valley of the two Gagnacks, in the country of the Damel, which towards its base was one hundred and four feet in circumference: these are all objects of new curiosity, which are to be found in this country, and which cannot be passed over in silence.

Every thing in Africa, indeed, inclines the mind to thought, to meditation, to reflection, to comparison, to remark. In these distant countries we are at every step conscious of the most powerful impressions; and should any nice observers penetrate at some future period into the centre of this part of the world, it may be con-

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easily lay hold of them. In the time of the Emperor Claudius, one of these serpents was killed, and a young child was found in its belly, supposed to have been swallowed only a day or two before. The Constrictor abounds in Asia, Africa, and America, but is found in the greatest number, and grows to the largest size, in the more sultry parts of those continents. Several of these frightful animals have been killed in Hindostan, and in the islands of Ceylon and Java, which absolutely measured upwards of thirty-six feet in length."—EDITOR.

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fidently presumed that the science of nature will be enriched with many new objects.

To delineate the countries which I have described, I have constructed such maps and designed such plans, as will afford an exact knowledge of them. I have also more than twenty sketches which I made in Africa, which represent either the principal establishments, picturesque or pleasing situations, portraits, customs, and scenes of the life and manners of this various people.

I have then reason to hope that my work, presenting as it does altogether, descriptions, observations, researches, disquisitions, maps, plans, and pictures of those countries which are within the cognizance of the government of the Senegal, which occupy so great an extent of Africa, and respecting which, there has been nothing hitherto known, except a few isolated notions, partial and vague, will be found to unite at once utility and pleasure.

By a singular but lucky circumstance, my return from Africa was by the way of Cayenne, which I reached in a negro vessel. I remained two months at Guayana, from which circumstance I had an opportunity of surveying and becoming acquainted with it. From thence, after having gratified myself, by viewing many English



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and French islands, both leeward and windward, I arrived at St. Domingo. This fine and flourishing colony was then governed with equal wisdom and success by Messrs. de la Luserne and de Marbois.

M. de la Luserne, inquisitive in every thing relative to Africa, had many conferences with me respecting it. The vessel which carried me back to France spoke a frigate, which conveyed to this gentleman his nomination to the office of Minister of Marine.

After my return in 1788, I was of opinion that some notes on this part of Africa might prove of advantage to government; and I transmitted to M. de la Luserne a work of 230 pages, large size, entitled, *" Observations on the Western Part of Africa, between the fourth and twentieth Degree of North Latitude."* To this work were subjoined eight maps and plans which I had drawn.

It is incumbent upon me from gratitude, and yet more from justice and from truth, to declare that this minister, equally distinguished for his urbanity and his knowledge, was highly sensible of that kind of glory which geographical discoveries entail upon a nation. He envied the advantage which, in this respect, England had over us; and if his administration had not been disturbed by political embarrassments, and the first dawnings of the Revolution, perfectly persuaded

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as he was of the facility with which the French of the Senegal might penetrate into the interior of Africa, and thus discover every thing which this region might offer, either new or curious, he would not have left it for the English to perform.

My enthusiasm for these discoveries appeared to him highly laudable, and he approved the project of forming at Paris, under the protection of the government, a society similar to that which has been instituted at London, for facilitating discoveries in the interior of Africa.

In 1789, I was occupied in preparing the materials which I had collected, relative to the western part of this continent. My "*Observations*" were but the embryo of this work, which was greatly augmented; the kindness of the Minister enabled me to render it perfect, and some important advantages were to have been the result of this publication, which circumstances however then compelled me to abandon.

Here I might indulge myself in speaking of personal misfortunes and regrets; but since that period the Revolution has been consummated; this great political catastrophe has shaken every corner of Europe; all quarters of the globe have felt the effects of the commotion which it has produced.



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Personal consideration then would be puerile, after such important events, and so many public calamities.

Suffice it to say, that my situation, and the great expence required in a work which must necessarily be accompanied by a vast number of maps, plans, and designs, have concurred to slacken and retard the execution of it, according to the method which I had originally conce ved.

A letter on Africa, printed by Devaux, and published January 4th, 1791, as well as some observations cited in a Memoir inserted in the Journal de Savans, may however be considered as proofs of the ardour which I felt for the execution of some enterprizes into the centre of this continent.

It was not therefore without great regret that I beheld the Voyages and Discoveries of Mungo Parke, published in 1799, and which, yet awarded to the English, the merit of having made the first successful advances in this path, which I had considered as peculiarly belonging to us.

This voyage has decided a question which for three thousand years has been surrounded by doubt, namely, the course of the Niger from West to East, including likewise the source of this ancient and celebrated river placed in the West of Africa, and the positive assertions that

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the Niger and the Senegal are totally distinct; while French prejudices, and the opinions of some celebrated authors, concur in supposing them one and the same. It were to be wished that this discovery were well authenticated, for many very plausible reasons authorize our doubts respecting it.

I conceived, therefore, that in the present circumstances, the publication of some pieces of my work might be of utility, arising from their connection with the commerce and interests of France, from the information which they contain as to the means we possess for undertaking journies into the interior of this country, and from the general notions which they offer respecting this part of Africa. Hence I resolved to extract these fragments, of which the traffic for gum, and the gold mines of Bambouk, form the principal chapters.

Being myself a soldier and a man of the world, I possess few of those talents requisite for a literary character; my book, which doubtless is very imperfect, will be a just object of criticism; but let my profession and my intentions procure some lenity.

A friend to moral principles, I feel persuaded, that in a relation of voyages in particular, some sacrifices must be made to decency and manners;

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and convinced likewise that public and private good, that the prosperity and importance of a great nation, is incompatible with a contempt for religion, I have always availed myself of such occasions as offered, in speaking of man and of nature, to refer with admiration to a Supreme Being.

In Africa, as in every other part of the world, may be traced the marks of his power, his strength, and his goodness; I have there beheld, spite of what is said, modesty, benevolence, probity, and amiable hospitality, in the number of natural virtues; I have there beheld the idea of a God, Creator, and Rewarder, impressed upon the soul, and engraven in the heart of the just man: even the gross and savage hordes believe in one God, and implore his goodness. From my travels, indeed, I have been armed against that fatal and guilty error of false philosophy, which would persuade us, that the universe, so admirable in its parts, so great in its whole, is but the consequence of chance.

If I frequently speak of the English with praise, it is that, while in Africa, I had many opportunities of observing their activity, their indefatigable industry, their knowledge, and their nobleness of character which places them upon a level with the first nations of the world; and I

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imagined that it might even be of advantage to represent them invariably to France, as an object of emulation and rivalry; not however but that I prefer France and my countrymen to every nation, and to every people on the face of the earth.

Some of my opinions may perhaps be found to be in opposition to those already adopted and established; it will doubtless happen that many of the subjects which I speak of will be differently considered by others; but I may affirm, that my opinions, and my sentiments, are the result of what I have seen; they are the result of a number of comparative observations, of documents which I have been careful to collect; of an uninterrupted study which I have devoted to this part of the world, and to my own undeviating conviction: if, however, I have sometimes fallen into error, I shall be happy to rectify it.

The freedom with which I deliver my opinions is an homage which I concede to the confidence which the character of our chief magistrate must inspire. On the 18th Brumaire, year 8, (November 8, 1800) he destroyed the most contemptible of all tyrannies; he liberated thirty millions of men, who could hardly look for happier or more favourable times; and the accumulation of glory, which France since this epoch has acquired, remains unsullied.

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Our government is dignified by principles of justice, of benevolence, and of humanity; and no truths, which are held forth to it from laudable motives, can incur its displeasure *.

A stranger to all the cabals, the factions, and the parties, which have during ten years convulsed France, and which have corrupted the sources of its happiness perhaps too long, I have no other wish than to see my country blest; I have no other ambition than to be useful to it, and that has been my sole object in publishing the following sheets.

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* This rhapsody on the French government, and on its chief magistrate, shews the author to have been very little gifted with foresight, or with that prescience which may be possessed from the dispassionate exercise of reason.—EDITOR.

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[The scarcity of good maps of Africa, and the necessity of proceeding on the general one of this continent by D'Anville, published in London in 1772, and translated into English, with many additions and amendments (the only one which I possessed), must plead my excuse for having in general adopted the first meridian of the island of Ferro, in the citations of lon-



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gitude which I have occasionally made in the following work.

It is to be wished that government would have a new general map of Africa constructed on a scale even more extensive than that of D'Anville; so that one might be able to add with facility the new observations and discoveries already made, as well as those which will doubtless be made hereafter.]

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# GOLBERRY's TRAVELS.

## CHAPTER I.

*Of the Government of the Senegal.—Of that part of Africa which is comprehended under this denom ination —What ought to be the powers of this Government, and of its influencing and acting upon a considerable portion of Western Africa—Reasons which should induce us to subject to one sole and superior Administration, established in the Island of St. Louis, all the concerns of France in the Western countries of this Continent, comprised between Cape Blanco 20° 47′, and Cape Palmas 4° 30′ North.—Of the Government of the Senegal, and its principal establishments, according to the plan of subjecting to its Administration, those parts of Africa above-mentioned.*

It is a part of the Western Africa, to the North of the Line, which has in France usually been designated under the name of the Government of the Senegal, on account that the navigation and exclusive commerce of this river, is totally subject to its authority, and that the island of St. Louis, situated about three leagues from its mouth, has in all times been considered as the chief seat or metropolis of this government: the gover-



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nors likewise make it their residence, and of course every thing relative to the supreme power is there concentrated.

The word *colony* cannot, however, be applied to the government of the Senegal, nor indeed to any of the establishments comprised within the sphere of its administration.

The island of St. Louis, though the chief place, though peopled with more than 6000 individuals, is not even itself a *colony*, nor can ever merit the name of one, since its inhabitants (whose island is but a bank of sand) are not *colonists*, nor do they possess any lands which they can cultivate.

But in order to form a just idea of this government, it must be considered as instituted for the purpose of directing and securing the commercial affairs of France, in this part of Africa, and for procuring to her all the power and influence which she should possess there, and which it will be easy for her to acquire.

In this point of view, it may also be said, that the limits of this government have neither been, nor need be correctly ascertained.

It has been usual to designate this part of Africa under the name of French Africa, a custom which we have a right to assume, since the first of modern European people discovered it to us, and it is one of our most ancient commercial possessions.

From an opinion too generally adopted, it has been usual to ascribe to the Portuguese, the first modern discoveries in Africa; but our right to the western coasts of this part of the world, possesses a much greater an-

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tiquity than theirs, and should not be easily resigned. Before the year 1364, the Normans, a people laborious and active, as well as excellent seamen, discovered Guinea, of whose situation Europe was then ignorant.

Rufisk, near Goree, and Toubaba, where the Norman merchants established their first factories; the bay of Sierra Leona, at which place they after founded another; the coast of Malaguette, where they denominated their factories Little Dieppe, and Little Paris: other establishments which extended even to the extremities of the Gulph of Guinea, present at this day, names and ruins, which are incontestible proofs of the Norman commerce on the Western coasts of Africa.

These establishments were formed before the end of the fourteenth century, and it was not till towards the middle of the following one, that the Portuguese endeavouring to discover a passage to India through the Atlantic Ocean, landed in Africa; they then discovered and doubled the Cape of Good Hope, the brilliant success of which leading them on to the most important conquests, threw such a glory on the Portuguese name, that the modern discovery of Western Africa, was never even disputed with them, though the Normans had arrived and had formed establishments there more than sixty years before the flag of Portugal first appeared.

We possess therefore, a right equally ancient and legitimate, to carry our commerce, and exert our industry in those Western countries of Africa which are situated between Capt Palmas and Cape Blanco, 20° 47′ North latitude.



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This right has also been strengthened by several treaties with various Negro Kings, who have ceded to us lands in different parts of this extent. That which M. Ducasse, Director of the French Company of the Senegal, made in 1678, with the neighbouring Kings of Cape Verd, is well known; by this, they gave unconditionally to France, an extent of forty leagues on the coast, both to the North and South of the Cape, and likewise a breadth of six leagues into the country.

Many treaties of peace between France and the maritime powers of Europe, have secured to us our rights and conquests on the coasts of Africa, and during the whole of last century, we enjoyed them with an authority more or less extensive; our factories also were more or less numerous and important, according to the vicissitude of circumstances, and the energy and ability of those who held the helm of our affairs, and as Senegal and Goree have, at different periods, sustained the hazards of war.

The cognizance of this government, as it was in 1787 extended Northward as far as Cape Blanco, on the shore of Barbary. All the coast comprised between his Cape and the Bar of the Senegal, was within its jurisdiction. Arguin and the two Portaudicks were included in this extent, but we very properly abandoned these useless and burthensome establishments.

This government includes in its administration, the exclusive navigation of the Senegal, and the power to ascend up this river as far as local circumstances will admit; the river of Felema, which to the West forms the limits of the country of Bambouk; the establish-

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ments of Galam and Podhor; the Southern parts of Zaara; the forests of the gum trees; the commerce of the gum, and the Moors of the desart; and in fact, every advantage which can result from possessing the sole right to navigate one of the greatest rivers in Africa.

To the South of this river its dependencies include all the coast between its mouth and the *Marigot* of Salum, and from the island of Goree to those of Madelaine.

Farther on is found comprised the *Marigot* and the kingdom of Salum, as well as the fine and extensive river of Gambra or Gambia, in which, however, we possess no power to navigate higher than the town of Albreda, situated opposite to Fort James. This English fort marks the precise limit, beyond which no French ships dare proceed, but it would be very easy, through the medium of the King of Salum and the Mandings of the Barra, to extend our operations even to Bambouk, by keeping along the right bank of the river.

We possess also a right to form establishments on the space between the Gambia and the Casamanca, on the Casamanca itself, the St. Domingo, the Rio Grande, the islands of the Bissagos, and in fact, on all the coasts and rivers situated between the Rio Grande and Cape Tagrin, and in the islands of Loz. But in all this immense extent, we notwithstanding, carried on no commerce, for spite of our claims, we left the English and the Portuguese in quiet possession of it.



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The river of Mitombo, or Sierra Leone, was in 1787, considered as inclusively the limits of the government of the Senegal towards the South. This fine river presents so many advantages, is so favourable to the establishment of an extensive factory, its relations are so extensive and so freely southward, that I think it necessary to present my reader here, with a summary idea of it.

The Cape of Leopards to the North, and the Cape of Sierra Leone to the South, indicate the entrance to the Mitombo, called by us the river of Sierra Leone, and which forms an excellent bay. The Cape of Leopards is situated 8° 35′ North latitude, and the Cape of Sierra Leone 8° 18′ in the same latitude.

The space between the two capes, forms the entrance of the river, and is in extent about 17′ or seven geographical leagues. It empties itself into the sea by a broad expanse of water or canal, and its banks to the North being covered with immense forests, and to the South ornamented with hillocks cloathed with beautiful verdure, the entrance of the bay of Sierra Leone, presents one of those romantic pictures, which so deeply impress the soul, and excite the admiration of those who are not insensible to the charms of the grand and beautiful scenes of nature.

When we reach the entrance of the bay, the eye is immediately attracted by a deep valley, which is entirely covered by this river, leaving no greater space at the most, than a hundred toises between its waters and the woods and hillocks which form its banks.

On the right bank the ground is low; on the left it rises into amphitheatres covered with majestic trees, of

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a remarkable strength and grandeur, and adorned with foliage at once rich, various, and profuse. The mind feels a pleasing melancholy in contemplating these august productions of undisturbed nature, of nature free, and almost in virgin purity; for there she is yet respected, and the age of a noble tree becomes as it were, an object of adoration.

My soul in gratitude for the sensations which it felt, and while it contemplated these noble plants, thanked the Creator for having placed them in such a soil, where they may vegetate in peace, and preserve their radical and genuine conformations, untouched by human art, which may indeed disfigure, but can never imitate.

Those who love these tranquil and solemn scenes which dispose the soul to pleasing contemplation; those who would feel all the beauties of the picture, which the entrance of this bay presents, must arrive there (as I did) in the month of April, and at about the fifth hour of evening.

The declining sun was behind us, and in less than two hours sunk into the bosom of the sea. The evening was calm, and refreshed by an agreeable little breeze which began to blow. The rays of the sun, which were of a reddish lilac, penetrated into the interior of the bay, and faintly illuminated the different objects. We perceived the masts of vessels at anchor near the village of Sierra Leone; two other negro villages, the busy movement of men, of boats, and of pirogues which were returning from fishing, all conspired to animate this interesting landscape, whose component parts are mild

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and simple, but which nevertheless pleases from its harmony *in toto*.

Europe, perhaps, may present prospects more rich and brilliant; we admire indeed in Switzerland and in the Alps, effects more surprising; but in no part of the world, can there be found a scite at once so exquisite and delightful, as the bay of Sierra Leone.

The chain of mountains which have the same denomination, seem to be a branch of that immense western ridge, called the Mountains of the Moon, which lose themselves in the Atlantic Ocean; the other branch of the same range, terminates at Cape Palmas. These two ranges of mountains are volcanic, and the base of the Cape of Sierra Leone, is surrounded with basaltic rocks, which the English call *Carpenters Rocks*.

Since 1784, we have barely maintained ourselves in this river, in a wretched situation on a little island named Gambia, and badly situated for a factory; but two superb English societies are established there, one at the village of Sierra Leone,* and the other in the island

* The Sierra Leone Company was established by 31 Geo. III. for the purpose of carrying on a trade between Great Britain and the coasts and countries of Africa. The object of this Company is to supersede in time, the necessity of the African slave trade, by raising sugars there by native Africans; it being one of the conditions of the Act, that the Company shall not deal in or employ slaves. The grant to this

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of Bence; they carry on an immense traffic, on the whole extent comprised between Cape Verga and Cape Palmas.

The commercial concerns of these two societies, extend northward over all the rivers which empty themselves into the gulph of the islands of Los Idolos, and southward over all those which fall into the sea between the Cape of Sierra Leone and that of Palmas. The English commerce at Sierra Leone, amounted in 1786, to fourteen millions sterling.

This bay is, however, within the government of the Senegal, and we have the same right as the English to extend thither our industry, as well as into the adjacent

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Company is for thirty-one years from July 1, 1791. Besides sugars, the Company have undertaken the growth of spices, coffee, cotton, indigo, rice, and every other species of tropical produce, by which they might encourage the native negroes to industry, reclaim them from their savage ferocity, humanize their minds, and teach them the arts of civilized life.

This establishment, during the late war with France, was totally destroyed by a French squadron; the Directors, however, with a laudable zeal, which, considering the object they have in view, merits the approbation of every enlightened individual, restored the colony to its former state, and have likewise projected a town on the peninsula, called Free town, which promises to flourish.—*Editor.*

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countries. But we, alas! know not how to avail ourselves of our privileges, nor of this fine and flourishing situation, which, however, is deserving of every attention which France can bestow, and where the government would doubtless attract and protect our commerce.

The ancient administration considered the Cape of Sierra Leona as the southern limit of the government of the Senegal. I know not, however, from what motives or reasons this error ſtill continues to be maintained. Our right to viſit freely all the coasts and rivers, as far as Cape Palmas, is incontestible; and the days of political frivolity, of indifference and negligence, by which our neighbours have constantly enriched themselves, being indubitably passed, our maritime existence begins to revive, and we shall in future learn how to avail ourselves of every occasion which may offer, to extend our commerce and our industry, into every part of the globe, which shall be found favourable to them.

I shall not at present enter into any details to demonstrate the importance of this bay; but simply observe, that it is the centre from whence activity may be extended over an immense space of country.

It may perhaps be concluded, from what I have said, that it will be necessary to disjoin this bay from the cognizance of the government of the Senegal, and establish it an independent government, of itself, but I am not of opinion that it would be expedient to do this at present.

My idea is in fact altogether different from this disjunction, which at all events could not take place, till

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our situation in this part of Africa shall have acquired just as much power as it at present actually wants.

My system, in the present state of things, would be to extend the cognizance of the government of the Senegal as far as Cape Palmas.

I shall enumerate the advantages which I foresee in this system, having first of all given some succinct notes on the coasts and principal rivers which are to be found in this extent, as well as on the islands which are spread over the borders of this part of the Senegal.

It is necessary, however, to observe, that except the Banana islands, which I saw through the liberality of the English of the island of Bence, I am indebted for all the information relative to the coast comprized between Cape Shilling and Cape Palmas, to the observations which I myself have made, and to such documents and maps as have been communicated to me.

To the South of the Cape of Sierra Leone is another, which the English call False Cape; then a river, which they call the river of the Twin Sisters, but which the natives denominate Ainetoopan; beyond this is Cape Shilling, to the South of which is the mouth of Kates river, and still farther southward, the river of Casamanca.

The volcanic islands, which we call those of Banana, are situated some leagues on the coast, opposite the mouth of Kates river, above eight degrees North latitude and are about three in number; that which the English call Volcanic Island, is many leagues in extent, in a direction from East to West, and more than one

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league in breadth. To the West of Volcanic Island are the two others, which are very small, and to the South three little *ilets*, which are in fact merely rocks.

At Great Banana is a bay, which the English call Cleveland Port; on the coasts of the same island is Bailly's Port; and towards the West is another fine bay, which they call Sandy Bay.

It is near Bailly's Port, where they have constructed a quadrangular fortification for the protection of a large village and factory.

The soil of the Bananas is fertile, and the climate healthy, on account that the air is refreshed by sea breezes; the vegetation is good, and here there are springs of fresh and clear water. In 1786, the English were in entire possession of these agreeable islands, nor had they received the least favourable consideration from the French government.

Coasting to the South, we arrive at Cape Tassa, which the English have named Tassa Point. At this place commences the bay of St. Ann or Scherbroo. This bay is very considerable, and receives the river of Cockobora and that of Yattooka, which is more to the South; a little further onwards is the mouth of the Scherbroo, which empties itself into this bay, leaving to the South the island of Scherbroo and Cape St. Ann, which is connected with it.

At the mouth of the Scherbroo is the Plantain and Skiner Islands. On the left of the mouth of this river, which is very considerable, is the island of Scherbroo, which is about fifteen leagues from East to West, and five leagues medial breadth. All the countries along the



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sea, between Cape Sierra Leone and Cape St. Ann, are very populous and fertile.

Four rivers empty themselves into the sea, between Cape St. Ann and Cape Monte, which takes its name from the river of Monte, which at the distance of eight leagues from its mouth forms an immense lake, in the middle of which is an island. The country is mountainous, fertile, and well inhabited, and towards Cape Monte the mountains are very elevated.

The same kind of soil is found between Cape Monte and Cape Mesurado, or, as it is called by the Portugueze, Monserrado. Between this cape, and that of Palmas, the extent is more than twenty-five leagues; the country is unequal, but fertile and populous, and in this space four rivers empty themselves into the sea. The two largest are the Timbo and the Rio Cestos, and the smallest are the rivers Yung and St. John. Between these two rivers, about four leagues in the interior of the country, is a high mountain with two points, which the English call Saddle Land.

The Rio Cestos is a large and noble river, in which vessels of sixty tons burthen may sail as far as twenty leagues. On its right bank, and about ten leagues from its mouth, are some very elevated mountains, which the English call Tobacco mountains.

To the South of the Rio Cestos is the Rio-dos-Escravos, at the mouth of which river, and on its right bank, is Petit Paris, founded by the Normans in 1380. The English call this *Little Paris*. Cape Palmas then presents itself, which is very elevated. Here terminates



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the southern branch of that grand western range called the Mountains of the Moon.

From Cape Verga to Cape Palmas, an extent of 250 geographical leagues, may be seen at each step marks of violent commotion and obvious volcanic impression: and the foot of Cape Monte is surrounded with many black rocks, which renders any approach to it dangerous.

From Cape Mesurado to Cape Palmas the population is numerous; all is fertile, and an abundance of fresh vegetation presents itself. It is supposed that there are on this extent upwards of fifty towns, or negro-villages of the first order; among these are the following: Cape Town or the town of Cape Palmas, Rook town, Garraway, Baddou, Little Sisters or *Little Paris*, (this is the *Little Paris* of the Normans) Drou, Niffou, Wappon, Krousetta, Boubah, Sinon Hill, Battoa, Tasson, Baffou, Sangwin, Rock Sisters, Wooding Place or the Timber Yard, the King's Village, Mauna, Tembo, Grand Carrow, Tabo-Dagou, (which was *Petit Dieppe*) Picanini Sisters, Yong-Serters, and Tabbocanea. All these cities or villages are very considerable, and the population of these fertile and agreeable countries is very great.

The soundings along this extent are always from ten to twelve, fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen fathoms, and rarely less than twelve. This circumstance, as well as the great depth of water near the shore, offers an additional testimony in support of that general convulsion, the effects of which is so frequently observable in this part of Africa.

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This coast is dotted with rocks always of a basaltic colour, and it will be prudent not to visit, nor even approach them, unless the lead is carefully used.

I observed here, that the English enter into all the smaller rivers, and even the most inconsiderable bays, and sometimes proceed to their very sources, thus seeing and acquiring a knowledge of every thing. Shall we hesitate to follow so good an example, or shall we despise lessons of such utility?

What I have already said respecting the coasts which the government of the Senegal *does* embrace, and those which it *ought* to embrace, will, I think, be sufficient to convey to the reader a tolerably just, though general, idea of them. I shall now therefore pass on, to an examination of the system I have already announced, for subjecting this considerable portion of Africa to the sole administration of this government.

Convinced that the government of the Senegal would find itself advantageously placed to exercise an important influence on Western Africa, to the North of the line, during my residence in this part of the world, I endeavoured to ascertain to what extent this influence might be carried; and am of opinion, that it is practicable to extend it, over all the portion of this continent, comprised between the thirtieth and fortieth degree of North latitude, and between the Atlantic Ocean, and the thirtieth degree of longitude of the island of Ferro.

The surface of this part of Africa is more than 372,400 square leagues, which is more than equal to



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the fifth of the total superficies of this continent. The thirtieth meridian East of the island of Ferro, which marks its termination towards the East, crosses the interior countries of Lower Ethiopia, Nigritia, and Guinea: its limits to the North run along the northern confines of the vast desart of Zaara; to the South it is impeded by the northern banks of the gulph of Guinea, and on the Weſt by an extent of near 1200 leagues of coast.

This part of Africa contains all the course of the Senegal, the *source* of the Niger, and, according to Mungo Parke, a part even of *its* course also; the cities already known of Thombouctou and Tocrrur are also comprised, as well as the populous and mysterious city of Houssa. This city, according to Mungo Parke, contains 800,000 souls, and with an importance very rare in this world has existed, secretly no doubt, during many centuries, on the banks of the Niger, or in the centre of Africa.

This portion of land contains likewise the great desart of Barbary, nearly the whole of Nigritia, a considerable part of Guinea, the country of Bambouk, in which are some very rich gold mines, thirty known nations, and a great number of unknown ones; five rivers, which carry vessels of a considerable magnitude, as well as a number of streams very favourable to commerce, and whose banks are well peopled. If at any future day we should traverse freely this immense tract of land, the whole of Africa would be immediately enlightened, and all its mysteries discovered to the world.

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The government of the Senegal is enclosed round; its connexions are very ancient, and for many years past, every thing has been propitious to their extension, and increase of their number.

I have therefore thought that it would be advantageous to adopt the system, of submitting all the concerns, all the operations, all the enterprises, all the views of France, of whatsoever nature they may be, and whether they have for their object the whole or part of this extent, to the influence and supreme direction of this government. Many contradictory plans will, I doubt not, be opposed to this system; and, to demonstrate all its advantages, it will, I know, be necessary to discuss it polemically. But this discussion, for which, however, I am well prepared, would form itself a chapter by far too considerable, to have a place in this work. I cannot therefore detail all the motives and reasons which have induced me to adopt and propose it; but shall simply indicate some political and local circumstances, which would be favourable to its execution.

If the government of the Senegal, in the extent which I give it, and the supreme administration of which would be situated in the island of St. Louis, could maintain relations, and an active and continued correspondence, either by sea or by land, with all the countries which are to be found scattered over this immense surface, I would not suppress the reasons which might be urged to induce a division of it into many se-



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parate and independent governments, which governments might be controled without embarrassment or confusion, by one superior and sole administration. But it will be seen that without France interests herself in it, this correspondence, and these relations, will nevertheless be established.

The two English societies, which, in the year 1786, existed in the river of Sierra Leone, then considered as the southern limit of the government of the Senegal, and which carried on such an immense commerce, extended their operations southward, even to Cape Palmas, and to the North as far as Cape Verga. A very active coasting, and an intercourse, at once regular and powerful, is unceasingly maintained along the whole of this extent by means of light one-decked vessels.

If during the time of year, when hurricanes, rains, and storms prevail, this coast should be impeded, the factories spread over this tract of ground, correspond by land with the bay of Sierra Leone, and a kind of post carried on by the negroes, who travel from twelve to fifteen leagues a day, was so easily organized, that the English establishments at Bence and Sierra Leone were thus regularly informed of every thing which might be interesting to them, and always sufficiently apprised of every event and circumstance, so as to conduct their affairs to the greatest advantage: nor was their intercourse with the northern and southern coasts ever interrupted or suffered to languish; but all the factories either informed, or were informed, of every thing important to be known, so that these two so-

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cieties never suspended their intercourse between Cape Palmas and Cape Verga.

Cape Verga on its side, maintains often by sea, but more frequently by land, a correspondence with the river of Gambra, and the result of this regularity of intercourse is, that the system of English commerce is connected and combined over a space of four hundred leagues, and its relations are established even between Fort James in the Gambra and Cape Palmas. This state of things I imparted on my return to Paris, in the year 1788; but they had not then any settled ideas with regard to Africa, though I must do M. de la Luserne the justice to observe, that he readily conceived the advantage which this part of Africa might produce to France, and was justly of opinion, that what England *had* done, France *might also* do. The facility with which the island St. Louis of the Senegal might, if she would, correspond both by sea and by land with Albreda, (a large village situated on the right bank of the Gambra) cannot surely be denied by any one who has visited this part of Africa. The island of Goree is placed just so as to be the intermediate point of the maritime correspondence of the Senegal with the Gambra; and to receive also the dispatches from those countries comprised between the Gambra and Cape Palmas. Land couriers (of which the government of the Senegal make such frequent use) might be employed to maintain the intercourse without intermission, and with all the activity which circumstances may require, or which the government might be disposed to give it. Hence it may be perceived



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that this correspondence of the Senegal with Cape Palmas has in reality long since existed; that the supreme administration of this government may organize it at pleasure; and that the connections which they ought to maintain, with the establishments which will be formed along this extent, can never be either suspended or interrupted, since they will be found, as well as the means, already to exist, and that in fact it only remains to employ them.

I have before mentioned a considerable number of rivers, which would be favourable to our proceeding into the countries of this continent, and which would give us opportunities of carrying our operations into the centre of Africa. I have also remarked, that the navigation of the Senegal would conduct us naturally into the central regions: it would open to us Kata and Bambara, two large countries situated in that space of 250 leagues in extent, which separates Galam from Thombouctou; it would conduct us by Felema into the country of Bondou and Bambouk, where the gold mines are to be found; by this route it would also present to us the means of arriving at the sources of the Gambra, and of penetrating into the very heart of Africa. Lastly, the navigation of the Rio-Grande, of the Sierra Leone, and of the Mesurado, would likewise carry us towards the centre of this continent.

The various people, who are in relation with the government of the Senegal, would also be a considerable means of possessing an influence over Africa.

This government might, if it would form through the medium of the Moors, connections with all the

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parts of Zaara, with Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, and even with the Nile, Cairo, and Alexandria.

The Kassons, the Serrawallis, the Foulhas, the Bamboukains, the Iolofs, the negroes of Bambara, the Mandings, and twenty other different nations, are attached to the government of the Senegal; and most assuredly these means of acting on a great part of Africa, the limits of which I have here pointed out, are not illusive, nor can they be contested.

Let it also be remembered, that if our situation in this part of the world ſhould one day assume importance; if the first enterprises which we may make to extend our relations, should be crowned with success, we should through the Moors, who are exclusively in our dependence, possess the advantage of disposing of the horses and camels which they would sell to us, unless perhaps we should have the foresight to rear them ourselves; we should also be put in possesion of the elephant, so numerous on the borders of the Senegal, and whom we should doubtless teach to submit to us as their masters. These animals would furnish so many opportunities of opening to our commerce and to our travellers all the routes into the central parts of Africa situated to the North of the line.

It may therefore easily be conceived, that in the very commencement some important advantages would result from a system, which, by collecting all these means, and the conduct of all our operations on so great a surface, and to such an immense extent, under the

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immediate inspection and direction of one superior and sole administration, would produce a general similarity of views, a unity of action, and every undertaking would tend to one only point.

The precipitate abolition of the slavery and slave-trade of the Blacks has reduced almost to nothing our affairs in Africa. To re-establish them, therefore, it will be necessary to discover new sources of commercial wealth, and to direct their stream towards the coasts: we must open new roads to industry, and find new markets for our productions.

It may also perhaps form a part of the views of France to instruct the natives of western Africa in the art of agriculture, to teach and to excite them to the free culture of the sugar cane, of coffee, cocoa, indigo, cotton, tobacco, rice, and even flax and aromatic plants, and trees.

The banks of many rivers of soft water are favourable to the culture of all these; premiums are worthy of princes and of chiefs; and the exchange, which they would propose for these commodities, would be at once their encouragement.

These endeavours are the most rational proceedings which can be employed, to bring Africa to a state of civilization. With regard to the colonization, I confess I was always unable to comprehend how they could ever apply this word in its proper signification to Africa.

If those who have spoken so much of colonizing it, have understood that Frenchmen were to be sent there, for the purpose of forming a colony, they have surely

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forgotten the very recent example of the independence of the English colonies in America.

In the point of view which I have set forth, France would doubtless form some establishments, which might serve as models and examples. Perhaps she would even rival England in the career of geographical discoveries; nay even rouze herself to a desire of penetrating into the interior regions of this part of the globe, and which to her would be very easy.

But whatever may be her intentions, our present situation in Africa is so circumscribed, so precarious even on the coasts, so poorly consolidated, and in fact so generally indeterminate, that to obtain any advantageous results, it will be indispensably necessary to constitute one general plan of operations in this part of Africa, and to confide the execution of it to one sole and superior administration, to which all the intermediate ones must be relative, and with which they must be uniform.

Would not this system of one sole and superior administration be more efficacious than to disseminate over this large extent, a number of petty governments independent of each other, which might differ between themselves in their views and character, which might also want a unity of concurrence, and which self-love and jealousy might turn in different directions, and induce to contradictory operations?

I have repeatedly observed, that it is not yet a question how to govern this considerable portion of Africa, as if altogether organized; but on the contrary, first to understand, and then to organise it; likewise to give to the commerce of France a consist-

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ency which it had not in 1787, and which it has not at present, but certainly ought to have. But I venture to predict, that if these important enterprises be conducted by chance, and are neither concerted nor combined, they will not be successful.

The island of Senegal, where the supreme administration of this government should always be fixed, is not above eight or nine hundred leagues from France;- it is indeed of all our ultra marine establishments the nearest to the metropolis, and it is an invaluable advantage that this proximity presents such an easy intercourse between the sovereign government and that of the Senegal; for they may correspond many times in the course of one year; and the former is thus enabled to address all its instructions and orders relative to the projects and plans it may have conceived, to the supreme administration of this government, beside resting confident that the secrets of its intentions will be better kept, than if it were communicated to a variety of partial governments, which might ill comprehend its views, or even contradict them.

The reader has already been informed of part of the motives which appeared to me favourable to the system of subjecting to one general plan all the concerns, all the operations, and all the enterprises of France in this part of Africa, and of confiding the execution of them to the council and the administrative power of the government of the Senegal.

From what I have said on this subject, it induces me to think that this system should at least be examined in all its points before it is rejected.

According to this plan, the execution of which

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appears to me very easy, it would be necessary to form some new establishments, the whole of which, however, I have not opportunity to indicate. I shall therefore proceed to mention only a few of them.

The island of St. Louis of the Senegal will always be the chief seat and metropolis of this part of Africa. The supreme administration will also be there constituted, and will direct all the operations on the river of the Senegal, all the enterprises into the countries which it runs through, and even into the interior and central regions to which the course of this river may lead, or with which it may favour our connections. A principal factory should be formed in the river Sierra Leone, and directly controul every thing relative to the coast, comprised between Cape Verga and Cape Palmas. The concerns and correspondence of the principal factory at Sierra Leone should be addressed to an intermediate administration, situated in the island of Goree, which should have the right to watch over this principal factory. The intermediate administration of Goree should direct immediately all the operations carried on between Cape Verga and the mouth of the Senegal; it should have, as already stated, a power of inspecting the whole southern extent of coast belonging to this government, and either by land or by sea should carry on an active and and regular correspondence with the supreme administration of the Senegal.

The commandant of Goree should be second in command to the head government, with such a delegated power as should authorize him to give provisiona



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directions relative to the countries comprised between Cape Verde and Cape Palmas, and every year should be compelled to make an inspection of the southern coast.

A supreme administration in the island of Senegal, an intermediate one in the island of Goree, and a principal factory in the river Sierra Leone, would therefore be the three chief establishments of this government, the operations of which, however, would require others of less importance; among these that of Galam must be particularly numbered, a factory on the Felema, the fort of Podhor, an establishment at Baol, an armed factory in one of the Bissagos islands, and that of Cape Palmas.

The military protection of the government of the Senegal, organized according to the plan which I have laid down, would not require any particular exertions.

It appears that the maritime protection and service would require only one division, which might be called the Station of the Senegal, and be made to consist of one frigate, a corvette, two brigs, and some light vessels fabricated in Africa. It may here be observed that the societie of Bence and Sierra Leone have taught negroes to be carpenters, and have formed dock-yards in the bay of Sierra Leone, in the island of Loz, and at Wooding Place, on the Grain coast; and that all their vessels of burthen, under 200 tons, were constructed in Africa of the wood of the country, and by negroes whom they have taught.

This station of the Senegal need not be relieved but once in two years, and then only half at a time, as it

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will be important that one part of the officers and seamen should remain to transmit to their successors that knowledge and those instructions relative to the different parts of the sea, which the French seamen did not sufficiently know at the time when I visited them.

The coasts comprised between Cape Blanco, on the Barbary shore and Cape Palmas, will require a regular course of relieving and sounding. Many parts will be found ill-determined in point of longitude; and the entrances of the rivers which empty themselves into the Atlantic Ocean, and the course of them have never been sounded by our seamen, or at best but very negligently so.

We are in the same predicament likewise with regard to the various creeks and channels which flow between the twenty-two little islands or *ilets*, which form the Archipelago of the Bissagos, and which separates them from the coast. Our maps are all very defective in this respect; a defect of which I very nearly had a fatal experience.

The islands of Los Idolos, and those of Banana, are hardly known, nor do we frequent those parts of the sea situated between Cape Sierra Leone and Cape Palmas. The imperfections of our maps of the coasts of this part of Africa expose our merchant vessels to so many dangers, that it would be well worth the attention of the government, to order that a general map of them should be constructed.

It was these considerations that led me to observe, that the squadron intended for the maritime service



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and protection of this government should be relieved by halves every two years, so that the sailors might be successively initiated in the knowledge of these different seas, and transmit the instructions and documents, which they may collect, relative to this grand portion of the coasts of Africa, and respecting which we possess so little exact information.

The military force, which should protect the importance or the defence and resistance of the establishments, posts, and forts, situated within the cognizance of this government, have nothing to perform, either complicated, embarrassing, or difficult. It is true that the number of land troops destined for the service of this government were not sufficient; and that giving a greater extent to the operations which they should direct, they ought to have a greater number of troops at their command. I think, however, that one demi-brigade, under the name of *Corps Franc du Senegal*, or under any other denomination, would be sufficient. It is, however, to be wished, that a body of about fifty horsemen were also added, by means of which it would be possible to make excursions to the distance of thirty and forty leagues.

The establishments, which it would be requisite to fortify regularly, are very few in number.

The island St. Louis of the Senegal, the chief seat of government, and the island of Goree, which unites in its small extent many of the advantages of Gibraltar, and which is capable of receiving with little expence a very great power of resistance, are the only two principal places susceptible of combined advantages, and of an absolute importance.

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It would be imprudent to neglect these two principal establishments, and to prevent them from receiving that strength which their situation would procure them, if aided by the succours of art.

A post on the Felema, a fort at Galam, that of Podhor, one of earth or wood in any of the islands of the Bissagoes, the principal factory of Sierra Leone, and that of Cape Palmas, would require no other guard than what would be sufficient to secure them from any attempt on the part of the natives, and at the same time adequate to maintain their independence in the midst of the countries which they are situated, and of the people to whom they are to dictate.

But even these measures must be adopted with great judgment and discretion, and it will be particularly necessary to reject any proposition for constructing forts in masonry, or any kind of defence in a solid or expensive manner in those parts comprised between Goree and Cape Palmas.

From what happened to the English in Africa, and even in these very seas during the American war, we may learn that all exorbitant expences lavished, to fortify posts spread at a distance from each other, and without any reciprocal protection, are useless and idle, when these places possess, from their natural situation, no intrinsic force which arises from some insurmountable local obstacles.

Hence it may be seen, that the government of the Senegal, so organized as to possess over this part of Africa a much more extensive influence than it did in 1786, might direct without embarrassment or com-



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plexedness, very important and considerable operations, and its military protection and defence would be happily circumscribed within the limits which local circumstances have designated, and which it would not be reasonable to exceed.

We have at length arrived at that epoch so long despaired of, the peace with England.

This peace is the cement of our pacification with all the powers of Europe; it unites two nations, which must reap in exchange a reciprocation of knowledge, and the most real benefit of which will be, in my opinion, the most sublime polity. This peace ought to be considered as the dawn of a new age to France.

By attaining the completion of this important work, the First Consul, Bonaparte, equally the favourite of prudence and of victory, has merited the esteem and confidence of every Frenchman who is the real friend of his country. But in the midst of the splendour of acclamation, which was from all parts lavished upon him, this young chief of our government did not suffer his attention to be withdrawn from the relative situations of France and England, and of which the following is one of the principal traits.

In 1784, one year after the peace which gave independence to the United States of America, the English had but 5000 vessels, and a tonnage of 500,000. Some official writings, published in London in the course of the year 1801, affirm, that they have at present 16,000 vessels, and a tonnage of more than 1,600,000, and that the population, the consumption, the revenues of the state; but above all, the Custom-house re-

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ceipts, which they call the pulse of England, and by which they judge each day of its health and power, have experienced a proportionable increase.

It is not my intention to afflict my country by a parallel which it could not sustain, nor by a recital of losses which we have experienced; but I will only observe on the necessity there is that we should avail ourselves of every occasion to repair them, and on the indispensable duty of government to excite, encourage, and protect our commerce.

In 1787, we barely existed on the western coasts of that part of Africa which I am describing; we scarcely transacted any thing, while the concerns of the English were numerous and splendid: this difference must have a cause.

The English, always encouraged and protected by their government, secure in its vigilance and support, established and conducted themselves with as much uniformity, order, and confidence, as in the city of London.

Masters of their time, they employ it with moderation; they execute cooly their operations, and a spirit of order, of great clearness, of great simplicity, is to be distinguished in the conduct of their commerce, and in the character of their merchants: these, above all, are the causes of those important events which astonish us, which give to this nation such a gigantic superiority over all the seas of the globe, and which inspired the commerce of France with fear and apprehension; while at the same time they might arrive at the same success, if the government would act with zeal, and if

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our merchants would feel impressed with their real character.

It must also be observed, that twelve years of revolutionary confusion, of disorders, and of anarchy, have rendered the science of governing the French nation perhaps more difficult than ever; and the government is doubtless aware, that it is by means proportionably mild, that we must ultimately arrive to a progress equal and uniform; and, during the interval in which we are proceeding from confusion to regularity, it is of the utmost importance that there should be objects created for the activity of France, and that our spirit and versatility should be directed towards objects of utility.

It is with this end in view that I have endeavoured to shew, in this chapter, that the part of western Africa, to the North of the line, presents a vast field for the noblest speculations in politics and morality, and that it is well worthy the attention of government.

Let there be conceived a plan of operation in this part of Africa; let the execution be confided to one sole administration, firm, wise, and enlightened; make choice of good chiefs, amongst whom it will be essential to find united, instruction, honour, and regular deportment; let there be a well organized land-force, and a very active maritime one. These will concur to give us an importance in Africa, and secure to us the success of any enterprises which we may undertake in this part of the world.

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## CHAP. II.

*Of different things worthy of observation and research, which this part of Western Africa presents—Observations on the Canary Isles—Remarks on various people of this part of Africa, on their distinguishing characteristics, their religion, and some of their institutions—Of the religion of the Negroes of Western Africa, and of Fetichism—Their superstition when there are eclipses of the Sun and Moon.*

In the preceding chapter, I have endeavoured to shew what the government of the Senegal is, the nature of its functions, and the influence which it might exert over a great part of northern Africa; from what I have said, the reader may form some idea of the number and extent of the operations which its administration can, and ought to embrace, and likewise some general notion of its political relations.

Before, however, giving some details of the principal establishments of this government, I will just mention, that this part of Africa presents to nice observers, to men of letters, to philosophers, and to *savans*, subjects equally curious and interesting; subjects for study, research and meditation, and in fact, an immense field for observations of every kind.

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In that part of western and northern Africa, which I am describing, are to be found the Canary Islands, which have always been considered as belonging to this continent, and which appears to have been detached from it, at a very early period. This Archipelago has been the source of many doubtful questions which yet remain unresolved.

In our passage from France to the Senegal, we put into the Island of St. Croix, off Teneriffe, where we remained some time. This Island is celebrated for its Peak, which is supposed to have an elevation of two thousand toises* perpendicularly above the level of the sea, but it is probable its height is much greater.

On the morning of the fourteenth day of our voyage, we perceived this mountain: according to our reckoning we were yet distant from it twenty-seven marine leagues, when at nine o'clock in the morning and in the

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* Or 12,000 feet. Dr. Heberden estimates its height at 15,396 feet above the level of the sea. According to Sir Thomas Herbert, the Peak of Teneriffe may be seen 120 miles off in a clear day. The vertex which appears sharp, and the exact resemblance to a cone, is flat for the extent of an acre of ground, in the center of which is a dreadful volcano. Though it frequently breaks out into flames, and smoke constantly issues from it, there has been no eruption from this mountain since the year 1704, when the port of Garrachica was destroyed, and the harbour filled up with the lava.—*Editor.*

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midst of a very thick fog, with which we had been surrounded two days, our main-top-man cried out—land and the Peak.

The optic powers and *tact* of the sailors are so exquisite and sure, that even through this fog, which was very great, they could accurately descry the Peak, which, however, was more than I could do, though I tried with great assiduity, and the sailors at the same time pointed out to me the direction in which they saw it.

About eleven o'clock, the sun began to disperse the fog, while its rays and a light fresh breeze precipitated it towards the earth, (that is towards the Canary Islands,) and at noon this mountain, which in the countries were it rises, is called the Peak of Teyda, appeared to us in all its plenitude of beauty.

This mountain maintains a distinguished rank among the highest of the globe, and from its isolated situation, it is certainly one of the finest. It presents a picture which strikes with astonishment, and inspires admiration and deligh, when, at the distance we discovered it, this noble elevation of the globe offers itself. When so far off it, the other mountains which to the North and East surround its base, are not perceivable, and this Peak detached and isolated, reigns over the maritime horizon, and seems an immense pyramid emerging from the bosom of the sea. This noble picture was additionally impressive to us, as the obscurity with which it was shrouded, was almost instantaneously dispersed.

It was winter when we arrived. The summit of the mountain, and all its elevated parts were covered with

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snow, which from the superior action of light was of a brilliant whiteness; while those parts which were shadowed, presented gradations of a most exquisite azure blue, and a delicate rose colour, which gave to this picture at once, so grand, simple, and impressive, a beauty, and loveliness, far beyond my powers of expression.

If any faith may be attached to accounts well attested, and which appear authentic, this mountain may be seen at a prodigious distance, and itself presents an immense horizon. Travellers have assured us that they have beheld it at a distance of more than eighty leagues; it may be seen from Lancerotta, which is fifty leagues distant, and the guides, (who attend those who travel to the summit of the Peak,) who often frequent this elevated point and who are accustomed to observe the different Islands which close its horizon, affirm that when the sky is quite calm and serene, they have often distinguished the high mountains of Madeira, which are a hundred leagues distant from this point, and very clearly the great Salvage, and all the Islands which form the Archipelago of the Canaries.

We beheld the Peak of Teneriffe in all its beauty, at the distance of twenty-seven marine leagues, and twenty two geographical ones, when it was in every respect so distinct that I was enabled to make a very exact drawing of it. These circumstances and recitals added to the uncertainty of barometrical measures, may justly incline us to doubt whether the height of the Peak of Teneriffe be yet correctly ascertained.

An elevation so great in an island of so small an extent, and the volcanic state of the greater part of the



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Canary Islands, are strong presumptions that this mountain once belonged to a more considerable country, and indeed those, who from its summit have been able to behold at one glance the whole of this Archipelago, and the other islands which it discovers, have been impressed with the *possibility* of an ancient continent, of which these disjointed points constituted a part; and of the existence of an Atalantis, the wrecks of which they think they have found.

That the Islands of Verta, the Azores, Porto Santo, Madeira, the Salvages, the Canary Islands, and those of Cape Verd, were in times long since passed part of a continent now submerged; and that these islands are the remains of that mysterious Atalantis, the existence of which has been transmitted to our days by an Egyptian priest, and by the dreadful catastrophe of Plato, is a possibility which nothing essential appears to contradict, but in fact, many well-founded conjectures may be urged in support of. This large island or continent, would be near eight hundred leagues in length, from North to South, and about four hundred leagues medial breadth.

When it is observed that Cape Malpayseco on the eastern coast of the Island of Fortaventura, one of the Canaries, is not above twenty-four geographical leagues distant from the most western point of the corresponding part of Africa, it may be conceived from such a trifling distance, that under this parallel the two continents were formerly connected; that the chain of mountains called those of Atlas, extended into Atalantis, of which the mountains in this unfortunate country



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were branches; it is also possible to conceive two epochs of Atalantis, the one undoubtedly primitive, when it formed a part of the ancient world and of the continent of Africa, and the other when it became isolated; this second epoch concluded with its total submersion, and the era of this catastrophe is so ancient and remote, that the very existence of the Atalantis, has at length become doubtful.

What gives great authority to the supposition, that this extensive submerged country, may have been united in some of its parts, with the continent of Africa, is, the very remarkable circumstance, that all the islands which I have named, which may have formed part of the Atalantis, and all the adjacent coast of Africa, display every where strong marks of an ancient convulsion, and volcanic vestiges, by no means equivocal, are unusually frequent.

The Guanches, the ancient inhabitants of the Canaries, and their mummies, are another strong presumption of the existence of this country, and of its having once coalesced with Africa; for, from what is known of them, we are authorized to think, that they were the descendants of a great people, and that their ancestors were the inhabitants of the ancient world.

There yet exists some of the descendants of these Guanches, a few poor families almost in a state of nature, being scattered over the Canary Islands. They may be found in the Island of St. Croix, of Teneriffe; and the little town of Guimao, contains three families, which, it is asserted, have descended in a direct line from the ancient Guanches.

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The following observations on this people, have been transmitted to us by some Spanish authors:

The Guanches were large, robust, and handsome; their countenances were solemn, but amiable; their understanding was correct, and their imagination lively; they were courageous; and had some idea of astronomy; their year was divided into four seasons, and they counted by moons.

They fed numerous flocks of goats, both male and female, the flesh of which served for their food, and the skin for their clothing. They caught the fish which inhabited their seas and rivers; they killed the game which abounded in their woods and rocks, and they cultivated roots, grain, and fruits.

Respect and obedience to their parents, affection for their brothers and sisters, and for all the branches of the same family, submission to their laws and their superiors; faithful to their word, their oaths, and their faith; unconscious of any excess; unambitious of wealth; unwilling to injure any person; hospitable towards all mankind; themselves the cultivators of their own lands; such were the bases of their morality.

The Guanches adore one only God, author of every thing which exists; they call him the Cause of all Causes, who had no beginning, and who will have no end, and they consider this Supreme Being as residing in heaven.

They had but two modes of punishment; adulterers were buried alive; children who were rebellious to their parents, conspiracies against their superiors, robberies,



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violation, and homicide, were punished with death by lapidation.

These people were divided into three classes, of which the princes and chiefs were the first, the nobles the second, and the husbandmen the third. Each family, however, of whatever class they might be, cultivated themselves their own lands, for agriculture was honoured by the Guanches, and all their harvests were celebrated by solemn public feasts.

In general their laws, their government, and their manners, were simple and just, and their character mild and noble. They were unacquainted with writing, and preserved the memory of events and historical facts by tradition; they represented themselves as being the descendants of a very ancient and celebrated people; they believed in a future life and the worship of the dead, whom they embalmed and preserved.

What an affinity have these Guanches with the traits which tradition has transmitted to us of the laws and manners, and character of the Atlantes! and how strongly do these affinities induce us to believe that they are their descendants.

The Atlantes of Africa inhabited the vallies of the mountain of Atlas. They were renowned for the wisdom of their government, the purity and mildness of their manners, and for their knowledge in the arts and sublime sciences. The ancients attributed to this people the invention of astronomy, and represented their patriarch Atlas as bearing the world upon his shoulders.

The Atlantes believe in a future life, and that the mortal body of man ought to be preserved in the tomb, there

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to remain till that moment when the immortal soul shall enter again the body it once animated. Hence those pious cares, that religious worship, which in the primitive ages of mankind were paid to the deceased body; hence without doubt, the art and custom of embalming, which towards the East, have been preserved and perfected by the ancient Egyptians, and which the Guanches practised in an island to the West of Africa, even at the time when the Archipelago of the Canaries was conquered by Spain.

It is well known to what perfection the art of embalming has been carried by the priests of ancient Egypt, and how habitually they practised it. Their mummies prove, that in their hands this art had, as it were, reached its highest perfection.

The priests among the Guanches, as well as those of Egypt, embalmed also their dead, and made of this art a secret and religious mystery.

There are to be seen in the Canary islands, particularly in that of Teneriffe, many of those caverns in which the ancient Guanches used to deposit their dead bodies when embalmed. There is one near Guimao, another between the Peak and Candalaria, and in these caverns may, even now, be seen some mummies standing up in their niches.

It is affirmed, that there are many more of these receptacles for the mummies of the ancient Guanches in the centre of the island of Teneriffe, near the Peak, but its inhabitants refuse to shew them, from a very amiable respect for the asylums of the dead, which ought never



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to be violated, and which it is criminal to abuse. In these caverns the Guanches have dug successive srories of niches sufficiently deep and high to admit the mummies upright.

At the time when we put into Teneriffe, the Marquis Branchiforte, Major-general Chamberlain, and one of the Captains of the Guards of the good King Don Carlos, was Governor-general of the Canary islands, and governed them with equal zeal, mildness, and judgment; he encouraged agriculture and industry, was much beloved and esteemed, and joined to a well cultivated mind, agreeable talents, and a character at once amiable and noble. To him we are greatly indebted for the reception which he gave us, and for all the kindness and attention which he shewed to us while we remained under his government.

M. Branchiforte gave me the choice of one of the mummies of the Guanches, which I had the liberty of selecting from amongst many others, and I particularly preferred that of a man.

From the top of the head to the lower part of the heel, it measured five feet ten inches. The lineaments of the countenance were yet visible. The hair was long and black, and well preserved, but it easily separated from the head; the gums, were ornamented with thirty-two teeth, which were so firmly seated in their sockets, that it was not possible to extract them without great force, and even with the assistance of an instrument.

The skies of the whole body was well preserved, but dry and flexible; it was of a deep brown colour; the back and the breast were covered with hair; the



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belly and the breast were filled with a kind of grain, which was white, and about the size of grains of rice.

This mummy was wrapped up and compressed like a child in swaddling clothes, with three folds of bandages about three inches broad, and with a kind of cord made of the prepared skin of the goat.

According to the received tradition of the country, the priests of the Guanches embalmed their dead bodies in the following manner:

All the moisture of the head and bowels was first taken out; they then washed the body in a kind of lye made of the bark of the pine-tree; it was next anointed with very hot butter or fat, which had been concocted with powerful and odoriferous herbs, such as sage and lavender, and other aromatic plants natural to the country; the body was then left to dry in the sun. When it was sufficiently desiccated, the same operations were again repeated, and it was again left to dry, till the carcase was completely saturated with the aromatic fat; nor was it till the body had become quite limp, that the operation was considered as complete. They then wrapped it up in three folds of bandages, and it was carried with funeral ceremonies to the cavern, where it was to be deposited, and there placed upright in its niche.

When we consider the incontestible proofs of the practice of embalming dead bodies (which exists even yet in Africa) in two countries distant from each other near 1800 leagues, and almost under the same parallel, does it not offer room to conjecture, that the art and

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custom of embalming the dead came originally from an intermediate and primitive people; that this people must be the Atlantes of Africa, who inhabited a country situated between Egypt and the Canary islands, and that, from them, this custom (practised most probably by the people of the submerged Atalantis, and preserved by the Guanches, their descendants) was transmitted to the priests of ancient Egypt, who have brought it to its present perfection?

These conjectures, which appear to me well founded, support the opinion of the existence of the Atalantis of Africa, and of the ancient Atalantis, which is indeed very probable, from the irrefragable traces of a dreadful catastrophe which has entirely overthrown this part of the world.

The influx of the ocean in the bason of the Mediterranean sea; deserts of white moving sands, which between Egypt and the Atlantic ocean, and between the 15° and 35° North latitude, occupy a space of near 300,000 square leagues; the volcanic state of all the islands which may have belonged to the Atalantis; similar marks of commotion, so frequent on all the coasts of western Africa to the North of the line; and other circumstances, which would be too long to enumerate, all concur to prove that these regions of the world have been destroyed, metamorphosed, and disjointed by a dreadful convulsion of nature; that their present state is not such as it was primitively, and that the tradition of the Atlantis of Africa and of Atalantis, which has existed so many ages unaltered, should not be entirely rejected, and thrown into the ob-

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scurity of allegorical and fabulous history. These interesting objects of study present themselves in Africa at every step.

The geology of this continent, the ancient Periplus of Africa, the establishments of the Phœnicians on the western coasts between Cape Palmas and the Streights of Gibraltar, are all motives which urge to curious research.

But even in a modern point of view, the various people of this part of the world, their phyfical varieties, their languages, their religion, their tradition, their customs, their constitutions, all offer to the mind a vast number of objects worthy of attention.

How was Africa peopled? The blacks of this country have they the same origin? Does their colour accord with their stamina, or is it the consequence of the climate and atmosphere? Has western Africa, to the North of the line, had any connection with Lower Ethiopia or with Egypt? Or must we not go as far back as the Phœnicians and Syrians, to discover the sources of the greater number of institutions and prejudices which are to be found in this part of the world? These and many other questions might be proposed, and require exposition.

Without however pretending to resolve, I shall proceed to examine some of them. Those which regard the origin of the population of Africa, and the cause of the colour of the negroes, would require a much more extensive discussion than can possibly be given them in this work. I shall therefore only notice some of the physical differences, and that variety of cha-

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racter, language, and intellect, which may be discovered among this people, and also on their religion and their ancient customs and institutions, which they yet preserve.

That part of Africa, which I have considered as being subjected to the administration of the Senegal, is peopled with a great many different nations, which have nothing in common but their colour, their woolly and crisped hair, and their being all fatalists, superstitious, and indolent. But they may nevertheless be distinguished, and even at a single glance, by variations so marked and particular, that it is impossible to confound them; and it may be observed, that many of them have existed a long time as a nation, and in a state of order, of policy, of importance, and with institutions, which bespeak them to be more ancient and more powerful than those who form the numerous hordes which are to be found in this country.

The most populous and considerable nations, which are connected with the government of the Senegal, are those of Bambara, of Foulha, of Manding, and of Iolof. I do not here include the Moors of Zaara, as they will be considered in a particular chapter, and because they are not negroes.

The Bambaras form a very numerous nation, which occupies an extensive territory under the fourteenth North parallel, about a hundred leagues above, and to the East of Galam. We have had opportunities of observing these people, because the greater part of the slaves, who traffic with our factories of the Senegal and of the Gambra, come from Bambara.

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These Blacks of the interior have all the decided characteristics which are ascribed to the negro race. Their colour, however, is not a fine black; their heads are round, their hair woolly and crisped, their countenances heavy and dull, their cheek-bones projected, the nose flat, their lips very thick, and their legs bandy. They are stupid, very superstitious, very fat, fatalists beyond all conception, indolent but gay, and perfectly good tempered, and their language is rude and savage.

Another nation much more celebrated, and extremely numerous, are the Foulbas; they spread from the fourth North parallel even to the southern banks of the Senegal, and have founded many colonies, which have risen to kingdoms.

On the northern banks of the river Mesurado, these negroes are known under the name of *Foulha*, *Sousous*, or *Susos*. They are to be found also under the same name in the mountains of Sierra Leone, on the shores of the Sherbroo, of the Rio Cestos, at Cape Monte, and at Cape Palmas. To the North, there is a colony of these Foulhas, which on the borders of the Senegal have founded the kingdom of negroes known by the appellation of *Foules* or *Peuls*, and which inhabit the river along an extent of near a hundred and thirty leagues.

But the principal body of this nation, with its proper name of Foulhas, possess an extensive territory towards the sources of the Rio Grande, under the tenth North parallel, and between the fifth and twelfth eastern meridian of the island of Ferro.

Teembou, a very populous city, situated about 80 leagues to the North-east of the bay of Sierra Leone,

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is the metropolis of the empire of this great nation, which once held an important rank, and which even at present reigns over a great part of the western countries comprised between the fourth and eleventh degree of North latitude.

The legitimate Foulhas are very fine men, robust, and courageous. They have a strong mind, and are mysterious and prudent; they understand commerce, and travel in the capacity of merchants, even to the extent of the Gulph of Guinea; they are formidable to their neighbours. Their women are handsome and sprightly; the colour of their skin is a kind of reddish black; their countenances are regular, and their hair is longer and not so woolly as that of the common negroes; their lauguage is altogether different from that of the nations by whom they are surrounded; it is more elegant and sonorous.

These Foulhas of the kingdom of Teembou have preserved in part the religion of the *Fetiches*, together with the practice of every species of superstition: with this they mix the religion of Mahomet, which has been communicated to them; but they follow it with a great admixture of idolatrous and superstitious customs. Those on the borders of the Scherbroo still maintain the institution of *Purrah*, an association of warriors who lay claim to a very high antiquity, and of whom there will be a particular notice taken in the course of this work.

The colony of Foulhas, which, under the name of *Foules* or *Peuls*, people the borders of the Senegal between Podhor and Galam, are black, with a tincture

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of a reddish copper colour; they are in general handsome and well made; the women are pretty, but proud, sensible, indolent, and affectionate.

All the Foules of the border of the Senegal are zealous Mahometans. They are intelligent and industrious; but from their habitual commerce with the Moors of Zaara, they have become savage and cruel, and our convoy from Galam have more than once experienced their perfidy.

The Mandings are another numerous people of Africa, and scattered over the western countries, subject to the government of the Senegal. Many colonies of this nation have established themselves in the country of Bambouk, and on the borders of the Gambia; but the great body of them occupy a vast territory above the sources of this river.

The empire of the Mandings is not so considerable as that of the Foulhas; but the merchants, and the *Marabouhts*, (or the *Mahometan priests*) of this nation have a very considerable influence over all this part of western Africa. These blacks are well informed, docile, and cunning; they are also able and indefatigable merchants.

Their colour is black, with a mixture of yellow; their features are regular, their character generous and open, and their manners hospitable; their women are pretty and amiable; they are zealous professors of the religion of Mahomet, though they retain many of the practices of Fetichism, and some superstitious customs. The features of the Foulhas and Mandings appear to



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have more affinity with those of the blacks of India, than with the negroes of Africa.

The Iolofs, though a nation less numerous, less extensive, and less important than those I have already described, are however more particularly deserving the kindness and favour of France, because it is with them that the relations of the government of the Senegal are best and most anciently established, and they are our immediate neighbours; the negroes of the the island St. Louis are likewise Iolofs; and lastly, this nation has always been regarded as our friend and natural ally, and she regards herself as being the same with Frenchmen.

This nation occupies unmolested the territory comprised between the Ocean and the banks of the Senegal, as far as Podhor, the southern limits of the *Foulhas-Peuls*, the western bank of the river of Felema, and from the sources of this river, in a line which, following the northern banks of the Gambia to the distance of twenty leagues, finishes at the sources of the river of Salum, whose kingdom is an appendage of this nation.

The Iolofs are the most handsome negroes of this part of Africa; they are robust and well made, their features are regular, and their countenances are ingenuous and inspire confidence; they are honest, hospitable, generous, and faithful; their colour is a deep and transparent black. Their women are mild, very pretty, well made, and agreeable company. Their language is very graceful, very harmonious, and easy to learn. They have, however, some characteristics

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in common with the negroes; for their hair is crisped and woolly, their nose is rather round, their lips are thick, and they are careless and idle.

This race of negroes, the most handsome and the finest black of all those dependent upon the government of the Senegal, proves that the deepest colour does not arise solely from the heat of the climate, nor the being more subjected to the vertical rays of the sun, but results from other causes; for the Iolofs are to the North of Nigritia, and the farther you recede from them, and approach towards the line, the black colour of the negroes becomes less and less strong and unmingled. All the Iolofs formerly constituted a single nation, and were governed by one prince, under the title of *Burb-I-Iolof*, which nearly signifies the same as emperor of the Iolofs.

Different branches of this empire have formed themselves into several independent kingdoms, some of which are yet governed by Iolof Princes, while others have been usurped by foreign nations. But the Iolof empire yet exists, and the *Burb-I-Iolof* reigns, though obscurely, indeed, in the interior, over a considerable extent of country, little visited by Europeans. Some degree of respect is yet, however, attached to the ancient title of *Burb-I-Iolof;* the descendants of the emperors yet receive sterile marks of deference and respect; and the princes, who govern those kingdoms disjointed from this empire, and their subjects, yet acknowledge the Burb-I-Iolof the chief of the nation.

These negroes are also remarkable for a certain importance and haughtiness which they have about t hem



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originating in a pride which they feel at the superiority of their race, and in a tradition which they have of the great antiquity of their origin.

If you say to an Iolof that he is a negro, he replies, "Me no negro—me an Iolof." It is among this nation that is to be found the greatest order and policy, the most extensive goodness and hospitality. They profess the religion of Mahomet; but as usual, with a mixture of superstition and idolatry.

These negroes are in general always well made and handsome, and their colour is pure; they are so disposed to regularity, and to civilization, and they have such a marked inclination towards benevolence and hospitality, that they may be considered as descending from a colony of those ancient Ethiopians, whom Herodotus has described as being the best made of all men, and whose character was so amiable, that Homer calls them irreproachable. Might not a colony of these ancient Ethiopians descend towards the Niger, follow the course of this river, arrive on the banks of the Senegal, and establish themselves between this river and the Gambia, towards the shores of the Atlantic Ocean? Besides the nations I have described, twenty others less considerable are to be found between the Gambia and Cape Palmas.

On the borders of the Casamanca may be seen the Fellups, whose features, countenance, character, and manners, have something savage and barbarous about them.

Farther onwards the Papels present themselves, who inhabit the borders of the St. Domingo, the Geba, and

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all the islands of the Bissagos. These people have dull gross countenances, and a ferocious appearance.

Proceeding towards the South, we meet with the Ballams, the Tymaneys, and the Bagoes: these are all well made, and their women are pretty.

After these, appear again the savage tribes of a dirty livid black, with coarse and harsh features, with projecting foreheads, and flat noses.

In fact, such obvious differences may be observed amongst these numerous nations, which distinguish them so much one from the other; their languages and their customs, even among the most aproximate countries have sometimes so little mutual affinity or resemblance, that they induce us to believe, that Africa has been peopled on the one hand from Ethiopia, and on the other by Indian colonies, which having landed on the eastern shores of this continent, have progressively spread themselves even to the borders of the Atlantic ocean.

The different religions of these nations, the idolatry which they all practice, the worship of the Fetiche gods, some very ancient and singular institutions, and certain customs which yet exist among them, offer room for various conjectures.

From the shores of the Mediterranean to the river of Gambia, almost all the negroes follow the religion of Mahomet; but from the left bank of this river to Cape Palmas, it is a mixture of Mahometanism, of gross idolatry, and of Fetichism.

Some of the tribes between Cape Verga and Cape St. Ann, erect temples to the devil, and believe in their



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sorcerers. I have seen many of these temples in the mountains of Sierra Leone; they consist of trunks of trees, planted in a circular line, with a roof formed of branches covered with leaves, and a square altar in the middle of the circle, without any idol or image, since the devil is invisible. Such are these temples, which are always found placed in woods. The table of the altar is covered with offerings, and all the pillars of these rude monuments are ornamented with votive sacrifices and oblations.

These idolators believe in two principles, acknowledging at the same time one only and supreme God, who inhabits the heavens, who created every thing, and who can destroy every thing; but who leaves the government of the earth to two Divinities of the second order, from one of which proceeds all good, and from the other all evil.

To the Good Principle they make neither offerings nor prayers; for from his nature he must do good, and there is no occasion to solicit it; but on the contrary, it is very necessary to obtain the favour of the Devil, because he is a Bad Principle, and loves to do nothing but evil. To the Devil therefore do these simple and ignorant tribes erect temples and altars, and his favour alone do they seek to propitiate.

Those hordes, who have temples for invoking the Devil, are very few in the countries immediately within the government of the Senegal; but there are more considerable nations, whose religion is Fetichism, or the religion of the *Fetizeros*.

From all the observations which I have made, relative to the centre of Africa, I am convinced that Feti-

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chism still remains the favourite and predominant religion, and that it has been the general one of this continent, till the period when Mahometanism spread itself, and was propagated by the Arabs and the Moors.

Superstition, idolatry, imposture, and illusion, are the bases of this religion, and of which some rude traces may be discovered in the Egyptian mysteries, and a disfigured likeness of it in the proofs of initiation.

This image is indeed hideous and disgusting to humanity; but it is so frequently to be met with in the religious customs of the negroes, and in many of their institutions, that we are induced to believe, that the priests of Fetichism have been originally disciples of those of Upper Ethiopia and of Egypt, and that they have become degraded and corrupted from the lapse of time.

It may therefore be suspected, that formerly Upper Ethiopia had some influence over these countries of western Africa, and which, in remote times, were doubtless in connection with her.

Between the river of Sierra Leone and Cape Monte, there are five colonies of Foulhas-Sousous or Sousos, who have formed among themselves a federative republic. Each colony has its particular magistrates, and its local government. But they are all subjected to an institution which these negroes call purrah. This is an association or confederacy of warriors, which has, in its effects, some affinity with the institution formerly so celebrated in Germany, called the Secret Tribunal, and in its mysteries and proofs with the Egyptian initiation.

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Each of the five colonies has its particular purrah, and each purrah its own chiefs and tribunal; purrah is in fact the proper name of the tribunal, and these five united form the grand and sovereign one, which commands the five colonies.

In order to be admitted into the confederacy of the purrah of the canton, it is necessary to be thirty years of age, and no person can be a member of the grand purrah under fifty; the eldest member of each purrah of a canton is selected, to form those of the grand or sovereign purrah.

No candidate is admitted to the trials of a cantonal purrah, but under the responsibility of all his friends, who are already members, and who swear his death, if he flinch during the ceremony, or if he betray, after being admitted, the mysteries and secrets of the confederacy.

In each canton comprised in the institution of the purrah, there is a sacred wood to which they conduct the candidate; he is obliged to inhabit a place which is appointed for him; he finds himself during some months in a small house, where men with masks supply him with food; he dares not speak nor absent himself from the place which is assigned him; and if he attempts to penetrate the forest with which he is surrounded, he is immediately struck dead.

After some months of preparation the candidate is admitted to the trials, the last of which, are it is said, dreadful; all the elements are employed to ascertain his resolution, and his courage. It is even asserted, that chained lions and leopards are employed in these mys-

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teries; that while they are performing, the sacred woods resound with mournful howlings; that during the night immense fires may be seen, which seem to threaten a general conflagration; that at other times flames spread along all the sides of these mysterious woods; that al unhallowed persons, whom curiosity might tempt to enter them, are sacrificed without mercy, and that some indiscreet people who have nevertheless ventured it, have disappeared without its being known in what manner.

When the candidate has undergone all the trials, he is admitted to the initiation, having first sworn, that he will preserve all its secrets, and that he will execute without hesitation, the decrees of the purrah of his tribe, and all the arrestations of the sovereign purrah.

If a member of this confederacy betrays it, or becomes refractory he is devoted to death, and this sentence is often executed in the bosom of his family.

At a time when the unfortunate delinquent least expects it, a warrior appears, disguised, masked, and armed; he exclaims, "the grand purrah sends thee death." At these words every one falls back, no one dare offer the least opposition, and the victim is sacrificed.

The tribunal of each purrah of a tribe, is composed of twenty-five members, and from each of these individual tribunals are drawn five persons who form the grand purrah or supreme tribunal of the general confederacy; hence this sovereign one is composed also of twenty-five members, who elect their chief from among themselves.

The particular purrah of a tribe takes cognizance of all crimes within its district, judges them, and executes its sentences. He also appeases the quarrels and heals

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the dissentions which may exist between powerful families.

The sovereign purrah never assembles but upon extraordinary occasions; it judges those who betray the mysteries and secrets of their order, and who oppose its decrees; it also, in general, ends those wars which sometimes break out between two tribes subjected to this confederacy.

When these tribes make war, after some months of mutual hostility, and when they have injured each other materially, they both unanimously wish for peace, and secretly solicit the sovereign purrah to interfere between them and terminate their warfare.

The grand purrah then assembles in a neutral canton; as soon as it is completely formed, it imparts to the belligerent tribes, that they can no longer allow men, who ought to live as brothers, as friends, and as good neighbours, to make war, destroy, pillage, and burn each others lands; that it is time to put an end to these excesses; that the sovereign Purrah will attend to the causes of this war; that it desires it shall be terminated, and in consequence a suspension of hostilities is immediately commanded.

It is a fundamental rule of this institution, that, from the moment the sovereign purrah is assembled to ordain a cessation of war, and till that cessation is finally pronounced, every warrior of the two belligerent tribes is prohibited from spilling a single drop of blood, and that under pain of death; hence a suspension of hostilities is sure to be scrupulously observed.

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The supreme tribunal remains assembled for the space of one month during which time they make the necessary enquiries to ascertain which tribe was guilty of aggression.

During the same period they convoke such a number of the warriors of the confederacy as will be necessary to execute the sentence they may pass. Finally, every information being collected, they judge and condemn the guilty tribe to a pillage of four days.

The warriors destined to execute this decree, are all taken from the neutral cantons, and depart at midnight from the place where the sovereign purrah was assembled. They are all disguised and have their faces covered with hideous masks; they are armed with lighted torches and daggers, and divided into detachments of forty, fifty, and sixty persons; they all arrive unexpected before the dawn of day, in the territory which they are about to pillage, and proclaim with a dreadful voice the decree of the sovereign tribunal.

At their approach, men, women, and children, and even those who bend beneath the weight of years, fly before them, and immure themselves in their houses. Should any one be met in the fields, roads, or streets, they are either murdered, or made captives, and in either case they are never heard of afterwards.

The produce of the pillage is divided in two parts; the one is given to the tribe who were injured and insulted, and the other to the sovereign purrah, who divides it with the warriors employed in the execution of its decree; this is the recompense for their zeal, their obedience, and their fidelity.

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When any family among the tribes submitted to the purrah, becomes too powerful, or too formidable, the sovereign purrah assembles them at its pleasure, and most generally condemns them to a sudden pillage, which is executed by night, and always by warriors disguised and masked.

If the chiefs of the family considered as dangerous, should resist, they are either put to death, or carried away, and led into the secret recesses of their sacred and solitary forests, where the purrah judges them for their rebellion, when they almost always disappear for ever.

Such is in part this extraordinary institution: they know that it exists; they feel the effects of its power: they dread it: but the obscurity which covers its intentions, its deliberations, and its resolves, is impenetrable, and a delinquent knows not he is condemned, till he falls beneath the stroke of death.

The terror and the dread with which this confederacy inspires the people in the countries where it is established, and even the neighbouring ones, is beyond all conception.

The negroes of the bay of Sierra Leone, speak of it with fear and reserve; they imagine all the members of this confederacy are sorcerers, that they have an intercourse with the Devil, that they can exact whatever they chuse, without its being possible to do them any harm.

The purrah likewise propagates these prejudices by means of which they exercise an authority which no one dares to resist, but which, however, they seldom abuse,



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but make it a means to render them respected both at home and abroad.

It is supposed that the number of warriors initiated and belonging to the purrah, amounts to more than six thousand, and yet the laws, the secrets, and the mysteries of this association, are scrupulously kept and maintained by these numerous confederates, who understand and know each other by certain words and signs.

Among the Mandings we also find the insti tutiono mysterious and sacred woods, where by illusions and trials, they prepare their sons and daughters for the ceremony of circumcision.

They have also the invention of the Mamma-Jamboh, a kind of demon, who proclaims his approach by howlings, and who was invented to punish and restrict their women. Those who are accused of any crime, are subjected to the ordeal of water, fire, and poison.

From observing the ancient religions, the institutions, the customs, and the superstitions, of these western nations, the influence which Upper Ethiopia and Egypt must have had over the western part of Africa to the North of the line, and even the correspondence which must have existed between the eastern and western nations of this continent, can no longer be a subject of doubt.

Even at present, the Egyptian cubit or its fractions is the measure used by many of these nations. The Bambaras, the Iolofs, the Mandings, and the Foulhas manufacture all their calicos in fillets, the largest of which do not exceed eighty-two lines in width, and the smal-



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lest, more than forty-one; these two sizes are the only ones employed in the manufacture of these fillets, which when joined together three or six at a time form the width of a piece. The length of them is always either four or five cubits. The looms of the weavers are constructed according to the dimensions I have just mentioned, and it cannot be doubted that it has its origin from the Egyptian cubit.

The superstitions of the negroes when there are eclipses of the sun and moon, appear to have been transmitted from India to Africa, and hence becomes very remarkable.

Whenever there is an eclipse of the sun or the moon in Africa, all the negroes are in the greatest consternation; they then imagine that a dragon or large serpent are waging war with these luminaries, and for fear either of them should be subdued or unable to devour the monster which attacks them, they repeat their prayers, and make offerings and sacrifices to their *Fetiches*; the women fall into loud lamentations, while the men beat the drum, and vessels of iron or copper; they also sound the horn, yell in a horrid manner, tie a number of dogs together by the feet on a tree, and flog them with whips, and then pretend that by this noise they frighten away the dragon or the serpent, make him leave go his hold, and thus deliver the sun or the moon from their dreadful opponents.

These superstitious notions have been so long established, and are so firmly believed throughout all Africa, that it is impossible to dissuade the negroes from them,



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nor will they ever be convinced that the deliverance of the star in danger, does not result from their prayers and sacrifices, but more particularly from the noise they make, which they say intimidates the dragon or serpent and compels them to quit their hold and relinquish the combat.

I have been witness of these acts of simplicity and deplorable ignorance; but this superstition, ridiculous as it is, and contemptible as it appears, does not, however, originate in the stupidity of the negroes; it appears to me to have arisen among them from a very ancient tradition, from which it may be presumed that if Africa have corresponded with Upper Ethiopia and Egypt she has also had relations with India.

In support of this I shall present the reader with the following abstract of a passage from the voyages in the Indian sea by M. le Gentil, of the Academy of Sciences.

"The astronomical rules of the Bramins, are written in an enigmatical style and in verse, in order that it may more easily be committed to memory, and also that it may be unintelligible, except to such as have received a proper education.

"M. le Gentil observes, that the Bramins in general calculate with great readiness. He wished to ascertain the extent of the astronomical knowledge of an Indian called Nana-Moudou, who had contrived from the secret protection of a powerful individual to learn from a Bramin some principles of astronomy.

"In order to accomplish this, M. le Gentil, gave him some examples of eclipses to calculate, and among



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others a total eclipse of the moon, which happened on the 23d of December, 1768.

"The Indian seating himself on the floor, began to delineate with a small piece of shell called courias, a kind of horoscope, which served to calculate by, and referring from time to time to a book, which lay by him, made of the leaves of the palm-tree, containing his rules, he gave in less than three quarters of an hour, the result of his calculations with the progressive differences of the eclipse.

"Having collated the account of the Indian with the ephemeris, M. le Gentil found it so exact, that he was greatly astonished at the manner, and paucity of time, in which it had been completed.

"In order to facilitate their astronomical operations, the Bramins have couched them in verse. Each term is compound, and hence requires much explanation before they can be comprehended. By this means the Bramins are understood by nobody, or at least by a very few people.

"The Bramin who had taught the Indian Nana-Moudou, kept the secret of his terms inviolable, so that he made his calculations mechanically. He found it is true the results, but he knew not what they meant.

"For example, in the lunar eclipses the Bramins have given to the subject of latitude, the name of potana-chandara, that is to say, the moon attacked by a dragon. The potana-chandara was the solution of the problem, and of course the Indian easily found it; he knew also, that potana-chandara signified the moon

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attacked by a dragon, but he did not know, that by this enigmatical word, the distance of the moon from its node was to be understood."

From this ambiguous style of the Bramins, it results, that the unlettered Indians, or more properly speaking, the vulgar, believe that eclipses are battles which take place between the sun and the moon, and monsters who would swallow them.

The prejudices of the African negroes induce them to believe, that solar eclipses are the consequence of a battle between that luminary and a dragon, and that those of the moon arises from a similar contest between that planet and a serpent.

But can it be doubted that these prejudices have their origin in a very remote antiquity, and may not the formula Potana-Chandara of the Indians be discovered in them?

This formula, which has been the source of a vulgar error, has it passed from India to Africa by Upper Ethiopia? or rather to trace its origin, must we not refer to a primitive people, from whom the Atlantes of Upper Tartary, those of Africa, the Phenicians, the Syrians, the Egyptians, and the Indians, have received those numerous institutions, those laws, and customs, which, when we compare them, always present a similarity, and many corresponding features?

I have now said sufficient for my readers to form an idea of the numerous interesting objects and subjects of research, which the study of Africa presents.

An investigation into those causes which have degraded this considerable portion of the globe, which



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have caused it to be forgotten; and which have during perhaps forty centuries kept it in a state of profound obscurity, and in a sort of insignificance are well worthy the attention of learned men.

It is interest and cupidity alone which conducts the lower classes of mankind into Africa. They do not occupy themselves in discovering the relations which this continent presents in all its parts with the primitive times, and the primitive nations of the earth.

But Europe, which at the present epoch possesses so much knowledge and such great information, and which they have already spread in the other parts of the world, will doubtless cease to neglect or contemn Africa, but will relieve it from the oppression and rigour of her insatiate avarice.

Europe, which boasts so much of her philanthropy, will not surely hesitate even for our own interest, to shed over this part of the world, so long insulted, the advantages of industry, of agriculture, and of civilization; and when even the invincible necessity of re-establishing our colonial rights in the Antiles, or Caribbee Islands, * and of restoring the value of St. Lucia and Guyana, shall compel us to procure individuals from Africa to cultivate these invaluable lands,

* The Caribbee Islands are in the West Indies, and this name has been indefinitely applied to the whole of the West India Islands. It is, however, more immediately understood as relating to that Archipelago, which lies between the fifty-eighth and sixty-third degrees of West longitude from Greenwich, and the

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philosophy must not suppose herself insulted, and hence disdain to throw her attention on this part of the world.

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eleventh and nineteenth of North latitude. The isles extend in a semi-circular form, from the island of Porto Rico, the easternmost of the Antiles, to the coast of South America; and the sea thus surrounded by the main land and the isles, is the Caribbean sea; its great channel leads North-west to the head of the Gulf of Mexico, through the sea of Honduras. The chief islands are Santa Cruz, Sombuca, Anguilla, St. Martin, St. Bartholomew, Barbuda, Saba, St. Eustatia, St. Christopher, Nevis, Antigua, Montserrat, Guadaloupe, Deseada, Mariagalante, Dominico, Martinico, St. Vincent, Barbadoes, and Grenada. These islands are again classed into windward and leeward by seamen, with regard to the usual courses of ships from Old Spain, or to the Canaries, to Carthagena or New Spain, and Porto Bello. The maps and geographical tables class them into great and little Antiles; a distinction which has greatly divided authors. The *Charaibes*, or Caribbes, were the ancient natives of the Windward Islands, and hence some geographers have confined that term to these islands only. Most of them were anciently possessed by a nation of Canibals, the terror of the mild and inoffensive inhabitants of Hispaniola, who frequently expressed to Columbus the dread of these fierce invaders. Thus when these islands were afterwards discovered by that great man, they were denominated

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It would be very easy to convince those who are willing to hear the language of moderation and of wise policy, that the traffic of slaves subjected to wholesome regulations, so far from opposing the success of enterprizes, the object of which would be the civilization of this continent, would on the contrary be propitious to, and accelerate, the moment when that trade would be no longer possible, for *civilized* Africa would have much fewer slaves than she has at present, and she would no longer sell them.

We must, however, guard against sacrificing truths so useful, to metaphysical theories, which however sublime they may appear, become criminal, the moment they cause the death or ruin of a single individual.

It is the prosperity of his country the philanthropist should always have in view, and he ceases to be a virtuous man, when the advantage and the happiness of the society to which he belongs, cease to be the principal objects of his solicitude.

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Caribbean Isles. The insular *Charaibes* are supposed to be immediately descended from the Galibis Indians, or Charaibes of South America.—*Editor.*

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## CHAP. III.

### *Division of the Government of the Senegal.*

In order to render more clear the reader's ideas of that part of Africa comprised under the denomination of the Government of the Senegal, I shall here divide it into three districts.

The first district will be included between Cape Blanco of Barbary, 20° 47′ North latitude, and the left bank of the mouth of the Senegal.

The second will comprise the whole extent between the mouth of the Senegal and Cape Verga.

The third will extend from Cape Verga to Cape Palmas.

I have already observed, that this book will only contain fragments and extracts of my travels in Africa; no one therefore should reproach me for any voluntary omissions, the cause of which I have frankly intimated, nor should they be astonished, if many of the subjects are found to be treated in a summary manner; for my intention was to give only a general idea of the government of the Senegal, of the importance which it might acquire, and of the influence which it might exercise over a considerable portion of western Africa, to the North of the line; and the happy circumstance of the peace with England, and the liberty which it gives to our commercial operations, have induced me to discuss almost as largely as possible, the chapter relative to the commerce of the gum of the Moors of Zaara, and of the country and the gold mines of Bambouk.

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## FIRST DISTRICT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SENEGAL, COMPRISING THE SPACE BETWEEN CAPE BLANCO OF BARBARY, AND THE LEFT BANK OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE RIVER.

### CHAPTER IV.

*Of the road or bay of the Senegal, and of the entrance to this river—Of the bar, and its dangers—Description of a kind of boat proper for passing the bar with less peril—Of the island St. Louis of the Senegal—Of its military and civil establishments—Of the defence of the bar—Observations on the troops intended for the service of this government.*

Our voyage from the island of Teneriffe to the anchorage of the Senegal, offered nothing very remarkable; the first object was to discover Cape Bojador, and then Cape Blanco of Barbary.

This last-mentioned Cape is arid, uncultivated, and wild; it hence presents no kind of advantage; its approach by sea is very dangerous; vessels know this, and when it is perceived they avoid it, that they may save themselves from a sand-bank which covers the Gulph of Arguin. Fresh water is totally unknown, and this point has never offered any individual motive which could occasion an establishment being formed there.

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We next arrived at the Island of Arguin, which is twenty-one leagues distant from Cape Blanco, and eighty-nine from the mouth of the Senegal.

This island is between eight and nine thousand toises in circumference, and is situated at the bottom of the gulph, which derives its name from it. The Portuguese formed an establishment there in 1664, and constructed on it a fort. Every unfavourable circumstance possible is here found united to crush every idea of an establishment in this island, and it would be difficult in short to find any reasonable motive for one. Were it even for carrying on the gum trade, it will be seen in the chapter, where this commerce is distinctly considered that such an idea would be erroneous.

The only advantages which the island of Arguin can possibly offer to us, are the fisheries of the *old woman*, and of the turtle.

The *old woman*, which the Dutch call *düke stockfish*, and which is in fact only a large species of cod, abounds in the gulph of Arguin. This fish, which weighs sometimes two hundred pounds, has a very fine flavour.

They dry and salt it, and cure it in fact the same as they do the cod of Newfoundland, but with this difference that it does not keep longer than six or seven months. The Dutch carry on this fishery from the months of January to July, and they buy from the Moors the salt necessary for curing it. This salt is procured from the point St. Ann, where are found natural and very abundant salt-pits; they dispose of this fish partly on the coast of Guinea, and partly at the Canary Islands.

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The best kind of turtle, namely, the green, is found also, during the whole year, in the Gulph of Arguin. This fishery is equally neglected, which nevertheless, deserves to be encouraged.

Some armed vessels from the Senegal, might proceed to the Gulph of Arguin towards the month of July, the commencement of the bad season, and procure turtles, with which they might return to the Senegal, and this food would be particularly favourable for invalids.

The English frequent the river St. John, the mouth of which is situated twenty-six leagues to the South of the Island of Arguin, which is rather a bay than a river, and its advantages may be reduced to a very small number.

After the Gulph of Arguin, we discover the Angel Hillocks, *(Mottes d'Angel,)* which are only two sand-banks, of a moderate height, situated to the North of Portendick, and from whence they endeavour to discern the bay.

Portendick is situated forty-eight leagues to the South of Arguin, and forty-one from the mouth of the Senegal.

This little port has experienced nearly the same vicissitudes as Arguin. A small town or rather Moorish camp, properly called Marza Giora, which the Moors name vulgarly Porto d'Adi from the Portuguese, and which the French from a singular habit which they have of mis-naming every thing*, denominate Portendick,

* This is a truism which very few will be inclined to dispute. We have had many instances of this singular facility of mis-naming, and of their aptitude " to nick-,

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has imparted its name to this little bay, which is covered with two large sand banks.

The bottom of this harbour is unequal, and the sea is bad during a great part of the year. Properly speaking, this bay is nothing but an *ance*. Another much smaller *ance*, to the South of the great one, bears the name of Little Portendick.

These two *ances* are easy to discover, it is indeed impossible to be deceived in them, since they are the only ones to be found between the river St. John, and the mouth of the Senegal.

Fish is found in abundance in them, and the same species are also met with, as in the Gulph of Arguin.

After all the revolutions which Arguin and Portendick had experienced during two centuries, the old India company fixed themselves there in 1724; they renewed this establishment and also constructed a new fort, the physical and military situation of which, has been as badly chosen, and as badly executed, as it possibly could be. It will always remain the same, and the government will unceasingly be subjected, to those unnecessary and destructive expences, which have the double inconveni-

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name God's creatures." A recent event will illustrate this remark. Who does not remember the late wretched, incoherent, and abusive Consular Manifesto, which ornamented the columns of the Hamburgh Gazette.—*Editor*.



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ence of occupying an unpleasant situation, and a useless lapse of time; these, however, may perhaps, be obviated, when military men of information, and after a thorough scrutiny, shall fix upon such spots for establishments as may protect our commerce.

It is very remarkable that fresh water is not to be found at Portendick, and it can only be procured by sending far up the country for it, or by bargaining with the Moors who procure it; they, however, charge very dear, and should there be any altercation with these perfidious savages, they would withhold the supply, and the inhabitants would be immediately at their mercy.

It is true that by the construction of a large cistern, these inconveniences would be avoided, but would it be worth lavishing such expences on an establishment at once useless and precarious?

From what has been said, it may be concluded, that the expences incurred, in re-founding the establishments of Arguin and Portendick, were ruinous, uncertain, and useless; that these establishments have no solid object; that they would infallibly be destroyed, were there the least chance of a war with England, that they are exposed to all the incursions of the Moors; and that far from thinking to establish ourselves on any part of the coasts, comprised between Cape Blanco, and the bar of the Senegal, we ought, on the contrary, to concur in opinion, that this coast should be absolutely abandoned, in order that the transactions which may yet be carried on there, may be all of them more forcible attracted to our factories of the Senegal.

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On quiting Portendick, and proceeding towards the South at 16° 5′ 3″ North latitude, we come within sight of the flag of fort St. Louis, of the Senegal.

When the easterly winds prevail, we may ride within a third of cannon-shot of the tongue of sand, which separates the river from the sea; but it would not be prudent to proceed so near, when the winds come from the West, as we should risk running aground, and, perhaps, not be able to extricate ourselves.

That which they call the road of the Senegal, is the anchorage, chosen by the vessels and ships, opposite the entrance of the river, and within sight of the bar.

This road is foreign, that is to say in full sea; it is in fact an anchorage, and not a road, but the bottom is good, though sometimes the waves are strong, and the sea very tempestuous.

All vessels which draw more than ten or eleven feet of water, are compelled to anchor here, but those which draw less, can pass the bar and enter into the river.

There is also another inconvenience which attends this anchorage, which is, that there is nothing to indicate it, and the coasts being extremely low, round the mouth of the Senegal, they present no obvious mark, by which to discover it; from hence it often happens, that when a vessel has made the fort of the Senegal, should it not find some other ship already at anchor there, it is in danger of passing this road, as nothing indicates that it has yet arrived there.

In 1788, I proposed a very simple plan, by which these dangers might be avoided; this was, to erect on



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the edge of the main land, on the left bank of the river, opposite to the principal passage of the bar, a large mast, at the extremity of which, should be suspended a hogshead, the upper part painted black, and the lower white; on the surface of this hogshead, might be written in black and white, the latitude of the signal, as well as of the grand pass; these characters might be easily read by the means of telescopes on board the vessels arriving in the anchorage, and by these means they would be forewarned of the situation of the bar. During the night a ship's lanthern might be hoisted.

Near this signal they might establish a military post, and a shallop with a good pilot, manned with six resolute negroes, who ought to be excellent swimmers, and always at hand, and in readiness to succour any unfortunate persons who might be wrecked at the bar. This is an establishment, which humanity and the interests of commerce, equally and forcibly demand.

There is something very extraordinary in the mouth of the Senegal; for this river does not empty itself into the sea, according to the direction of its course, but laterally; from hence it results, that its waters in entering the sea, have no impulsive force; the entrance of this river is also impeded by a sand bank, which is the prolongation of a tongue of sand, which runs nearly North and South; it has but a very trifling breadth, and forms the right bank of the river; it is denominated the Tongue of Barbary, from its forming the continuation and extremity of a coast bearing that name.

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The waters and the tides of the river seldom cover the bar with more than twelve or thirteen feet of water, during the whole of the dry season. From this circumstance, it results, that the bar of the Senegal, or the entrance of this river, cannot be passed by any ships drawing upwards of ten feet of water; all other vessels drawing more, are compelled to remain in the road, and cannot pass without lessening their ballast, and taking other precautions necessary and indispensable.

But the small depth of water which covers the bar is not the only inconvenience attending this passage; it has particularly, that of being always difficult, and often during a great part of the year, (on account that the sea breaks with great violence,) it is extremely dangerous; hence accidents here are very frequent.

Even on the day, when we arrived at the Senegal, a boat belonging to a negro-vessel, named the Forcalquier, had perished on the bar at seven in the morning: it was coming from the river, to carry nineteen captives on board, when it unfortunately upset; seventeen of the captives were drowned, and only the master of the boat, four sailors, and two negroes, were rescued from the waves.

The currents on these coasts have a direction from North to South, and conveying with them the sand, which hence accumulates, it obstructs the course of the waves, and consequently occasions them to break with great violence.

This circumstance occurs on almost all the western coasts of Africa, and it is more or less dangerous, ac-



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cording to the difference of the bearings, the winds which predominate, and the obstacles which the waves encounter.

It is very rare to see the bar absolutely calm and tranquil, but on the contrary, to behold the sea tempestuous, is altogether as uncommon.

The waves which break here are always ternary, if I may be allowed the expression. I have often observed the general partiality of nature for this unequal number.

When the sea is agitated but feebly, it may be remarked that three very distinct waves successively break against the bar, ; they are apparently united, for there is often a marked interval between the assault of the first three waves, and the succeeding ones.

When the bar is boisterous, this ternary junction of waves is always evident; but then the assaults follow each other so quick, that it is hardly possible to distinguish any interval. The sailors call a sett-off, (*un-embelli*,) that interval between two attacks, which are long enough to admit of the bar becoming calm and allowing them an opportunity to pass; but the violence of the waves is often so great, and the attacks so rapidly successive, that there is no pause between them, and consequently no sett-off.

The force and celerity with which the waves of the same assault, and even the assaults themselves succeed each other, depend on the state of the sea, and on the winds; but I have often observed, that when the sea was calm at a distance, and the wind blew but gently, the waves have broke with great violence over the bar.

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I have therefore thought, that the cause of this event might be traced to some convulsion which the sea may experience, at a distance, and which may agitate it, even to the extremity of this bay. After the cause of these powerful movements has ceased, the surface of the sea quickly becomes calm, but the main body of the element preserves for a long time an oscillating movement, which is not perceptible in the open sea, but which near the shore become very obvious.

When the waves come from a distance, and break upon the bar, the passage is then always difficult, often dangerous, and sometimes impracticable, without being exposed to certain destruction.

The effect of the waves, when they are in all their violence, is, that the second or third passes over the shallop, generally fills it, and either submerges it, or causes it to upset, because the two last waves break in a semi-circular form; the third in particular produces this effect, and it is easy to comprehend the cause of this expansion.

The first wave does not form itself semi-circularly, because there is no impediment in its progress, arising from the return of the water of the former wave, and when the assaults are distinct, the first wave has time to dissipate itself; the second forms an arch from its meeting the waters of the preceding one, which in returning to the sea obstructs its progress, and compels it to rise; but the third wave, which experiences at once the combined obstacles of the returning waters of the first and second wave, is compelled to expand considerably in forcing its progress; and as its celerity

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is determined by a powerful impulsion, it arises, and forms a semi-arcade or semi-circle, the elevation of which is in proportion to the degree of its rapidity.

It is in general this third wave which sinks the vessel; for the arch which it forms is of so considerable a diameter, that it covers it entirely from the stern to the fore; and it has sometimes happened, that shallops have been turned completely on the point of their keel. A melancholy instance of the power of the waves occurred to the shallop belonging to the corvette, called the Rossignol, in the month of February, 1786; she was commanded by M. de Corneillan, the lieutenant. On entering the river, he found himself in the middle of the bar, which he had imagined to be passable, when the third wave of an assault caught his stern, heaved him on his fore, and left him supported, in equilibrio, in this posture for a moment, and then overturned.

The lieutenant, M. de Corneillan, and his crew, were saved almost miraculously; but it was not till after they had been abandoned for the space of two hours to their own exertions, and their despair.

During my residence in Africa, four vessels, twenty-two shallops, and a hundred and nineteen men, among whom we sincerely lamented the loss of the Chevalier de la Hechois, lieutenant of the vessel commanding the corvette la Bayonaise, perished on the bar of the Senegal. The Chevalier de la Hechois joined to the talents and knowledge of an able sailor, all the requisites of an amiable man, and all the virtues of a good citizen.



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So many misfortunes, and so many sacrifices, sufficiently deplorable and afflictive, should induce government to institute opposite the bar, and at the foot of the signal above-mentioned, an establishment, which, while it indicated the anchorage, and the bar, should likewise be so arranged, as to enable it to afford immediate succours to those who are compelled, by duty or other causes, to expose themselves to the dangers of this perilous passage, and often those of shipwreck.

Frequently during peace, and more particularly in time of war, the indispensible necessity of communicating with the road of the Senegal, will not admit the delay of consulting the then state or dangers of the bar, and those who are unfortunately compelled to encounter them, too frequently risk the danger of destruction.

This consideration, which is so intimately connected with the attention and care, which the life and preservation of men naturally demand from each other, has induced me to give some attention to the construction of a vessel which should be capable of passing the bar with less danger at those times, when the power of the waves which break these, expose mariners to the hazard of perishing. The essential qualities of such a vessel would be its incapability either of sinking or of being upset.

It would be very easy to give it the first quality, by a deck constructed in such a manner that the surface which it would describe, should produce a sufficient equilibrium to prevent the vessel, in every instance, from sinking beneath the weight of the waters with

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which it might be covered. This deck should be so arranged, by the constructor, as not to impede the exertions of the rowers. But from the force of the waves it appears much more difficult to prevent the vessel from upsetting.

It appears to me, that very considerable stability might be given to a vessel of this kind, and which would enable it to resist the shock of the waves, by a method capable of being removed at pleasure; namely, by causing its centre of gravity, to be lowered at any time when it may be found necessary, and thus augmenting its gravity and its power of resistance.

Let us suppose, that in the vertical plane of the vessel's centre of gravity, there were placed a rod of iron formed by a number of bands of the same metal; at the extremity of this rod, let there be fixed a weight of iron, or of lead, the specific gravity of which, would be in proportion to the effect required from it.

When there was no occasion for this weight, it might be kept in some place allotted for it in the keel of the vessel, the bottom of which might be easily constructed for this purpose, and in such a manner, that the weight would occasion no inconvenience, nor produce any friction.

The rod might be rendered firm by an apparatus very easily constructed, and which might be provided with teeth, so as to render it capable of being worked like a crane. By means of a simple handle, the weight might be lowered down eighteen, twenty, or twenty-four inches beneath the bottom of the keel. It appears perfectly manifest, that the descent of this

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weight must produce a difference in the vessel's power of resistance, against the efforts of the waves.

I shall not at present enter more largely into the execution of this project, the idea of which has been suggested to me by the dangers of the bar of the Senegal, which I have frequently passed. I was, however, more strongly urged, by the interests of humanity, and by the misfortunes which I have deplored and been witness of.

It may be supposed, that the difficulties and dangers of this passage renders it alone a natural defence to the entrance of the river; but this will not be found sufficient, and other measures must be resorted to, effectually to defend it against any enemy which may attempt to force it. These means of defence are traced on the map of the mouth of the river, transmitted to government in 1788, and the original of which is yet in the Colonial Office.

As soon as the bar is passed, a depth of seven or eight fathoms of water, and sometimes more, is found in the interior of the river. This would therefore admit of the largest vessels navigating there, were it not for the bar: but it would even be possible to proceed up the river as far as Podhor, where the tide still flows, though the extent of the course of the Senegal, between its mouth and the last-mentioned place, is nearly sixty leagues.

After having passed the bar, and proceeding up the river about two leagues from its mouth, and one from the island St. Louis, we perceive the islet of the English, which is situated nearly in the middle of the river.

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This islet is only from sixty to eighty toises in length, by forty broad; but it, nevertheless, offers the means of preventing the enemy from approaching the island of the Senegal, and of obstructing their progress should they pass the bar.

About three leagues from the mouth of the Senegal, and one from the islet of the English, * is situated the Isle St. Louis of the Senegal, which should be considered as the principal establishment, and the chief seat of this government. This island divides the river into

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* This is literally the meaning of the author, but it is surely a puerile tautology; for, if in the preceding paragraph, we were told that the islet of the English was one league from the island of St. Louis, we do not require to be informed in the next one, that the island of St. Louis is one league from the islet of the English. But our author frequently presents similar instances of pleonasms, and there is scarcely a paragraph in the original, which does not afford specimens of inelegance, and sometimes of incorrectness; while this, however, increases the difficulty of translating him with any degree of accuracy or spirit, it does not detract from the valuable information which this work undoubtedly contains. It is gold, not polished into brightness, or laboured into elegance; but covered with the dross of the mine, which must either be cleared away, or suffered to obscure and contaminate its splendour.—*Editor.*

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two branches, of which the western one is nearly three hundred toises in length, and the eastern more than five hundred.

The length of the isle, from North to South, is twelve hundred toises; but from East to West it is only one hundred of medial breadth.

When passing by sea within cannon shot of the island of the Senegal, it presents a very agreeable and inviting perspective, of which Fort St. Louis is the principal object. To the right and left extends the two parts of the city, the streets of which are very regular, and in general are composed of thatched houses; buildings in masonry are occasionally scattered among them, and are covered with platforms, according to the custom of the country.

The woods, which grow on the left bank of the river, appear at this distance as if joined to the isle, and in perspective, present a luxuriant and very rural aspect; but this illusion is destroyed by a nearer approach, for nothing can be more arid, dry, and void of vegetation, than this island, the soil of which is a fine moving sand.

At the time when I resided in Africa, the population of this island was composed of Mulattoes and free indigenous negroes, amounting in the whole to about two thousand four hundred individuals. To this number must be added what in these countries were then called the cottage captives. These people resided on the grounds of their master, and from always remaining, intermarrying, and serving within the bounds of his



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domains, became in some measure like bondmen of the family, and might be said to make one body, as they experienced from him nothing but benevolence. This domestic population amounted also to two thousand four hundred individuals at least.

The number of white inhabitants, if we include established merchants, soldiers retired and married with mulatto women, and workmen, do not all amount to above sixty individuals.

Lastly, the governor, the military and naval officers attached to the government; the persons employed in the administration; the whole of the African battalion; and all the retinue might form, in toto, nearly six hundred persons.

At that time they carried on the slave trade, and there were always, in the different prisons, from a thousand to twelve hundred captives; so that, in 1787, the total population of this island was not at the most more than six thousand.

This population, on such a narrow island of sand, and which produced no means of subsistence, may perhaps appear astonishing; but all these means were not, however, wanting, for the negroes of the main land procured them, and there was never a deficiency of various kinds of meat, of fish, of fowl, of guinea-hens, and of some of the vegetables of the country: in short, they lived here extremely well.

I shall not here enter into any minute details on the manners and customs of the mulattoes and negroes of this island, of which I can only speak in a summary manner. In fact, they offer nothing very extraordinary,

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as they are greatly tainted with the influence of European customs. It is in the interior, where we must observe the negroes; in this island they have no longer their simplicity, nor their native manners.

One part of the negroes of the island of St. Louis, follow the Mahometan religion, while the others who are also mulattoes acknowledge the Catholic faith.

All the free and wealthy negresses, as well as the mulatto-women call themselves signares, and the custom of adopting this title is very general in all the parts of western Africa, between the Senegal and Cape Palmas; it is considered as originating with the Portuguese in Africa.

Such of these signares as are unmarried, contract willingly with Europeans that kind of marriage, which the Turks call kabin or kubin, the duration of which is limited to a certain time.

When a European would contract a marriage of this kind, he cannot do it without the previous consent of the family of the signare, with whom he wishes to live, to whom presents are made; when these and other formalities are observed, they live freely with these women, who consider themselves as being in some measure legitimate wives, and make the children adopt the name of their father.

Fom hence it is, that in the Senegal, at Goree, and at Salum, in the Gambra, and on all the coasts as far as Cape Palmas, it is very common to find many negroes and mulattoes with French, English, and Portuguese names. In the river Sierra Leona and the neigh-



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bouring coasts, all the rich negroes have the luxury of Portuguese names, sometimes amounting to eight or ten, and which they always repeat successively when they speak of themselves.

I shall now return to the principal subject which has induced me to make these observations on our supreme establishment of the government of the Senegal.

In 1787, the military establishments, as well as all the buildings belonging to the government, were in general badly constructed, and in a state of dilapidation.

The military hospital, the only one in the island, was altogether unfit, ill made, and very limited. Among its principal inconveniences may be reckoned, the groundwards for the sick, where they suffered excessively from the heat, and that more particularly during the rainy season, a time when sickness is most prevalent; magazines much too small, and too low, a kitchen badly disposed, a laboratory where the distiller is stifled with heat, and whence he sometimes with difficulty escapes; four wards which altogether contain about sixty beds, only one chamber for a single surgeon, a miserable collection of medicines, and a very small closet for the director of the hospital. Such was the place destined for the reception of the sick, in a country where diseases are dreadful, violent, and almost always mortal; where the extreme danger to which they are exposed, can be compensated only by the most scrupulous attention, and the most extensive foresight.

This hospital is destitute of wards for the officers of the garrison, and still more for the government marines,

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or for those of the merchant-men, who may put into the Senegal by accident, or who come there for the purposes of traffic.

Nor are the quarters of the soldiers in any respect superior; they are ill constructed, very confined, low, and likewise unhealthy.

I have brought forward these truths which I considered as important, because I have observed with regret, in Africa, as well as in America, that the barracks and hospitals of the soldiers are almost every where badly made, indifferently attended to, and very inimical to the preservation of the soldiers. These circumstances may be considered in Africa, as some of the principal causes of their frequent maladies, and when these diseases take place, the invalids are conveyed to hospital, where, alas! they experience no cessation of illness. Destitute of every convenience, and of every assistance, but above all of a sufficient access of air, which might contribute to their convalescence, they perish victims to the ignorance of their doctors, and their surgeons; to the inconvenience of their accommodations; to the total want of attention; to the deleterious qualities of the medicines, and sometimes even to the badness of the provisions.

In vain did the chiefs of the government of the Senegal represent the inconveniences of the principal establishments destined for the barracks and hospitals of the troops; these representations were always without effect, and the parsimonious system adopted by the then



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ministry with regard to this part of Africa, suffered every thing to remain in its usual manner.

But now that the French soldier is become a citizen, and that France is indebted for her integrity, her aggrandizement, her power, her importance, and her glory, to her generals, her armies, and to those soldiers who in the revolutionary war have proved that Frenchmen can dare, undertake, and execute every thing, and whose activity, patience, courage, and intrepidity, are above all eulogy; now that France is governed by a chief, who covered with laurels, still preserves a grateful recollection of the courage of those warriors, whom he led to victory, the considerations I have here brought forward, will, doubtless become a principal object of the attention of government.

Fort St. Louis of the Senegal, which occupies nearly the centre of the isle and the plan of which is equally confused and scanty, forms a square, the sides of which, from East to West, is thirty four toises in length, and those from North to South thirty five.

The angles of this square are fortified by a species of bastion, but they are so badly planned, and of so small an interior space, that it is hardly possible to manœuvre even a few field pieces.

The platform is level with the first line of buildings which surrounds the interior of this fort. Its ramparts are built upon strong beams or rafters, which form the roofs of the store-houses and caves below, and they are not more than thirteen feet above the earth itself.

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This fort has likewise no ditch, and it is easy to reach without any obstacle the very foot of its escarpment; it is in fact of use only to terrify the natives of the country, and the Moors, for so far from being able to resist a regular attack, it might even be taken by assault, by resolute troops. Some efforts of art might however correct a few of these imperfections, but it would be altogether impossible to render it capable of sustaining singly a regular attack of four days.

If the French concerns of this part of Africa should ever become so important as to render the safety of the isle St. Louis of the Senegal, and the circumjacent establishments indispensable, it would then be proper to construct another fort at the South point of the island.

The bricks which would be necessary for this building might be made in the country, and the facility which they possess of procuring lime and wood, would render the expence very inconsiderable.

During the months of July, August, September, and October, the bar is an obstacle not very difficult to surmount, but at any time an enterprizing enemy will not be obstructed by any difficulties or dangers which they have foreseen. It is therefore necessary to increase the difficulties of this passage.

The first defence of the bar might be made by two strong redoubts with which it should be flanked; they should be constructed in wood, and fortified with artillery of a large bore, with the necessary apparatus, for firing red-hot balls into the vessels which might approach, other pieces for sending grape shot into shallops endea-

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vouring to pass, and lastly very large mortars for firing bombs at the ships in the anchorage.

A ship capable of containing twenty-four pieces of cannon, should be anchored in the interior part of the river, about a hundred toises from the bar, and so disposed as to be capable of giving all her fire with effect, and of sending either balls or grape-shot into the small vessels and boats which might effect the passage of the bar; these dispositions would most probably destroy the greater part of any force which might undertake this enterprize.

If a part of the army should succeed in penetrating into the river, the redoubts above-mentioned might bear all their fire upon them, and maintain the combat in conjunction with the armed vessel which might change its position; a division of the gun-boats might also render the contest against any force, successful in entering the river still more sanguinary.

Forts, and other modes of defence, might also be formed on the left bank of the river, and which would impede any approaches to the islet of the English; a large redoubt established here might attack the enemy in front, for the space of half an hour in flank, when in a lateral position, and in the rear when completely passed; as soon as the enemy had escaped these attacks he would immediately find himself within the batteries of the southern point of the island St. Louis; but already reduced by the losses which he has sustained, and harrassed not only by a conflict of three hours, but by innumerable consequential dangers, he would be but ill calculated to stand against the fort, which I have al-

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ready observed might be constructed at the Southern extremity of the island.

To these might be added, an entrenched battery on the nipple of Guethandar (*le mammellon de Guethandar*) and the grand battery of the East, would doubtless be sufficient to prevent any establishment taking place in the anchorage similar to that which M. de Vaudreuil, occupied in 1779.

But the principal efforts of resistance ought to be made at the bar, for it is there, that the art of the sailor, and of the soldier, should be displayed in its utmost extent; in fact the very existence of the principal establishment of the Senegal, will always be found to depend on the courage of the military, on a considerable display of artillery, and consequently on the degree of precision with which this defence is arranged and executed.

There exists no physical certainty, with regard either to the possibility, or the impossibility, which an enemy may possess of arriving at the island St. Louis, either by the branch of the Maringouins, or by the creek of the wood of Griel.

It is therefore a very reprehensible supineness not to attain incontestible information relative to these highly important facts; and any longer negligence of this kind will be so much the more dangerous, as it may lead to the most serious consequences; for if, as I think, such an event might succeed, particularly if it be undertaken towards the bad season, the enemy might arrive by the North of the river, without encountering any obstacle whatever; it is therefore ad-

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viseable not to neglect defending the North part of the island, but on the contrary to create some obstacles to any descent which the enemy might meditate.

As the time when I was in Africa, France maintained, for the service of the government of the Senegal and all its dependencies, only one corps of men, which is called the African Battalion, which consisted of four companies, and was formed in the same manner as the land troops: this battalion was very insufficient for the duties incumbent upon them. It may here be observed, that it would be much better if the government of the Senegal were to assume at once, all the importance of which it is susceptible. I do not, however, here intend to examine what strength ought to be given to it, but shall simply observe, that as in every case the artillery will be found the most efficient protection for every part of the government, it is of importance that the soldiers, charged with this defence, should be able gunners and engineers, and the accuracy and precision of aiming, as well as the activity and promptitude of working the batteries, should be the daily exercise of these troops.

In no one circumstance, and on no one occasion, will they stand in need of parading and manœuvring; it is an infantry capable of using the cannon; it is a corps of artillery-men, which should be charged with the defence of the government of the Senegal.

Artificers of different trades should also be increased here, such as carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, bricklayers, pump-makers, house-painters, locksmiths, tinmen and men capable of writing, and able to facilitate

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the progresss of all kinds of work; with such an establishment much might be done during peace, and the service would also be better attended to during war.

The water of this island is brackish, and is procured from holes, which are daily perforated in the sand; it is known to be bad, and to it, may in a great degree be attributed the diseases of the soldiers. This inconvenience is, however, remedied by the use of filtering stones, which they may procure from the island of Teneriffe in great abundance: the excellence of this method of purifying the water is acknowledged, and it certainly ought to be adopted in preference. Cisterns might also be formed, or boats sent every day to the main land to procure fresh water.

It is very essential, that in these burning climates the soldiers should be prevented the fatal use of spirituous liquors; and it is highly necessary, that those who cater for the troops should be interdicted from serving this fermented liquor to them among their daily rations.

I shall here mention the ration of an English soldier during the time that the commerce of the Senegal was in the possession of England.

This note is extracted from an official register, which is a model of prudence and precaution.

This ration consisted daily of a pound of beef to each man; a pound and a quarter of new bread, of good quality; six ounces of butter a week; a choppin of Teneriffe wine per day, with pepper and salt.

In the same register from which this excerpt is taken, and the original of which in English, is in my possession, is in the following note:

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"It having been represented to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury, that the use of the red wine of Bourdeaux, employed as a medicine in the hospitals, is efficacious in curing dysenteries and other local diseases, the lords have contracted with the commissary general of provisions, to furnish this wine to such of the soldiers whose illness may require it, instead of that of Teneriffe."

The bills of mortality of the troops serving in Africa sufficiently prove, that too much care and attention cannot be paid to their health and their preservation.

It is however of importance, that neither their subsistence nor their hospitals should be abandoned to a set of men, who from natural depravity endeavour to enrich themselves from whatever they may furnish; who even calculate the advantages resulting from a supply of damaged provisions, and of medicines totally deficient in virtue, which they purchase at a low price; who would purvey bad butter, spoiled vinegar, musty flour, rice of an inferior quality, weak and adulterated wines, made by avaricious hirelings; the oils and the lard rank; sugars of the very worst quality; and even the medicines themselves, which are intended to dissipate disease, to repel death, and to recal existence, are confided to the direction of a set of men, who sell, without opposition, articles of the most nefarious and detestable qualities.

I have insisted forcibly on these remarks, because I well know the evil which the exclusive company of the Senegal have already done, and at which a patriotic and ingenuous mind cannot but feel indignant. I most



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sincerely hope, that what I have just said may be the means of preserving countries capable of becoming very valuable to France, from the dreadful abuses which I have seen heaped upon them.

The observations which I am now about to offer, on the means of building in masonry, and in wood, are here laid down with the intention of assisting the government, and the merchants, in forming some idea of the expences which new establishments in this part of Africa would require.

All the brick-works of the island St. Louis of the Senegal, are made of bricks simply baked in the sun, unless they are intended for erecting strong and lasting buildings, when they are regularly constructed in brick-kilns.

The ordinary dimensions of the bricks used in 1786 were eight inches long, by four broad, and two inches thick.

Their form was not exactly regular; their fabrication was very bad, and their materials so friable, that a great number of them were always inevitably rejected; from which circumstance I observed, on many occasions, that a cubic fathom of building with these bricks generally required about 5000 of them.

Whenever government may be willing to improve this essential matter for constructing durable buildings, it will be found very easy, for I myself rendered them something superior.

There is no deficiency of good clay for making bricks in the environs of the island St. Louis, for it is abundant in those of Soorr and Thiong, which are the



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most approximate, and it might be procured in profusion from the interior of the isle of Biffeche, and of the surrounding lands at the mouth of the river; it would only be necessary to subject this earth to a previous munipulation, in order thoroughly to deterge it from any heterogenous matter which might be intermingled with it.

I proposed forming a brick-kiln in the island of Thiong, which appeared to me the best adapted for such an establishment, and where they might easily have instructed negroes, and made them expert at this work; but the poverty of the finances was then an insuperable obstacle to this plan.

In 1786, they paid at the rate of four bars for bricks per thousand: the bar is an imaginary money, and equal to about five francs in silver.

It may be considered as an invariable rule, that there must not be expected, from a negro workman employed in building, above half the labour which may be had from able men of this kind in France; and I have observed, that while a good French bricklayer, will build in France his cubic fathom in four days, a negro requires eight days to do the same quantity in Africa.

The expence of three cubic fathoms of building in bricks made in the country, was in 1787 as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Three bricklayers for eight days each, at one franc per diem - - - | 24 |
| Two assistant bricklayers (*aides maçons*) for eight days each, at 10d. per diem - | 8 |
| | 32 fr. |

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| | |
|---|---|
| Brought forward - | 32 fr. |
| Two labourers, for eight days each, at 10d. per diem - - - | 8 |
| Fifty-six rations, for 56 days, at one franc per ration - - - - | 56 |
| Total expence for labour - | 96 fr. |

A hogshead of lime, made from oyster-shells, costs, if made in the island St. Louis, a bar, or five francs. The banks of these fossil shells are very numerous in the environs of the island, and the lime which is procured from them is of a superior nature; but the quality of the water detracts from the excellence of the mortar, and this also requires to be improved by manipulation.

If the hogshead of lime contains four cubic feet, one cubic fathom of brick-work will require thirteen hogsheads of lime.

*Recapitulation of the expences of three cubic fathoms of brick-work, constructed in bricks made in the Senegal, according to the observations made in* 1786 *and* 1787.

| | |
|---|---|
| Fifteen thousand bricks, at 20 francs per 1000 | 300 fr. |
| Thirty-nine hogsheads of lime - - | 195 |
| Workmanship - - - | 96 |
| Contingent expences - - - | 12 |
| Total - | 603 fr. |



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The expence of one cubic fathom of this solid brick-work may therefore be estimated at nearly two hundred francs.

But as instead of paying in silver, the custom there was to pay in bars, by way of merchandize, and as the average value of a bar of this kind, which consisted either of gunpowder, of plates of iron, scarlet cloth, of glass ware, and in short of any other kind of merchandize, did not bear a proportion of more than two francs and ten pence to real money, and it being of importance to the public treasury to continue this economical custom, it follows, that if they pay in bars of this kind, for a cubic fathom of brick-work, its absolute value is notmore than a hundred francs.

The adjacent forests of the island St. Louis will furnish in abundance wood for building, which does not require more than eighteen feet in length and four inches square. Wood of greater length, and consequently of more extensive dimensions, might be procured from the distant forests, whether in the country watered by the Senegal, or in those irrigated by the Gambra; and this timber, in every respect proper for durable buildings, would not cost one-third of the value, which must be paid if it were brought from Europe, besides that they would then be compelled to import only planks of oak and deal. I shall not, however, extend any farther these economical details.

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## CHAP. V.

*General observations on the river of the Senegal, and on some of the circumstances of its course, between the bar and the cataract of the rock Felow—Some more particular notes on that part of this river, between the island St. Louis and the fort of Podhor.*

THE extent of the course of the Senegal, from its mouth to the cataract of the rock Felow is near two hundred and eighty leagues, though the distance in a direct line between the cataract (which is the boundary of the French navigation towards the interior of Africa) and the bar, is not more than a hundred and sixty leagues. But there is perhaps no river in the world which has so many turnings, circumvolutions, and contortions, as the Senegal.

It may immediately be perceived, that, from the rock Felow, as far as the sea, this river delights to meander through all those countries whose declivity is gentle, and every thing indicates that that portion of Africa, comprised between the eighth degree of East longitude of the island of Ferro, and the Atlantic Ocean, and between the twelfth and eighteenth degree of North latitude is very low, and the inclination of its level is scarcely perceptible.



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The waters of the Senegal rolling over this land, which is in general sandy, light, and almost horizontal, is found to be subjected to all the different inflections of the countries which they describe, and to all the caprices of the slightest local circumstances. Thus a forest, more impervious than usual; a bank of rocks; a tuft of earth, more tenacious and hard, or a vein of earth more compact, quickly changes the course of its waters, and directs them in such confused and contradictory lines, that the river always seems upon the point of recurring to its sources.

Perhaps no other river on the face of the globe is so often subject to unexpected sinuosities, and to such numerous circumvolutions; different branches of its course take so frequently directions absolutely opposite to the road which it ought to pursue, that in the navigation of this river, whether by sailing or towing (the latter of which is most common), the vessels are incessantly compelled to change their tack; the ships, even of the same convoy, seem as if pursuing a contrary course; and on many occasions it has happened, that after having for eight and forty hours followed the contours of a peninsula, the gulph of which is sometimes nothing more than a tongue of land of twenty toises in breadth, they find themselves at nearly the same meridianal point at which they set out.

This tortuous navigation augments the passage from the island St. Louis to Galam nearly 100 leagues of unnecessary extent; and this voyage, which can only take place in the rainy season, because at this time the elevation of the waters is greater, has always

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been regarded as so detrimental to the health, as well as to the life of those who have performed it, that it is a well accredited fact in this part of Africa, that one-third of the Europeans have perished in the attempt. But in fact the windings and turnings of the Senegal, its advancings, and its retrogradations, are among the least of its inconveniences.

Sand-banks, and congeries of rocks, which intersect the bed of the river; enormous trees, and immense portions of land, which its waters detach, and bear along with them; successive hurricanes and storms, which are almost always followed by dead calms; a burning atmosphere, which, when not violently agitated, becomes stagnant and insupportably oppressive; unexpected difficulties, which arise principally from the carelessness and ignorance of the negroes, who generally form the ship's crew; conferences and interminable negociations with the princes and chiefs of the countries passed along; and lastly, the disagreeable exhalations, from the flowers of certain trees which flourish in great plenty on the banks of the river, and which diffuse a pleasing smell, but produce most dreadful head-achs. Such are the obstructions, the disgust, and the dangers of this tedious navigation, which by the union of a certain number of precautions, and measures at once possible and practicable, and dependent upon the government, might become not only less tedious, and more easy and commodious, but might also be freed from the greater part of those inconveniences, whence result such dreadful diseases, which even to



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the present moment attack many of those who undertake this voyage.

If it were rendered more commodious, more easy, and less perilous, this passage from the island St. Louis, to Galam, would present a rare union of all that is astonishing, pleasing, and admirable; and it would become one of the most curious and interesting voyages, that could possibly be performed; for along the whole extent of these numerous and extensive contours of the Senegal, nature has lavished with an incredible profusion, her most varied riches, her most noble vegetation, and every thing which the animal kingdom presents, either astonishing, singular, or fascinating.

Some of the spots here displayed, exhibit all the graces and attractions of nature in a state of purity; while in others we admire objects which venerable age has rendered august and striking; here are ancient forests of trees, the size and elevation of which, bespeak their years, and these prodigious plants, which yet appear green and flourishing, after a growth of so many ages, seem solemnly to announce that in these desolate and fertile countries nature never expires.

In every part where the waters of the river are shallow, a vast number of hippopotami, and of *caymans* may be seen of a most prodigious size.

The banks often become the theatres of the aukward and ridiculous sports of a number of apes of various kinds; at other times we behold the innocent amusements of antelopes, gazelles, kids, and a variety of other animals, whose manners are ingenuous, and innoxious;

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the trees are covered with birds of a brilliant and singular plumage, and which at once delight the eye, and arrest the attention.

The gloomy and extensive forests of these regions are inhabited with lions, leopards, hyenas, jackalls, and wild boars, who often present dreadful spectacles of their ferocity, and of their sanguinary and furious contests.

Surrounded by an innumerable quantity of all these animals, whose form, colour, and size, are as various as their habits, their manner and their character are distinct, lives the elephant, at once valuable and peaceable.

This animal from its size, courage, and strength, is respected and dreaded even by the most formidable and the most ferocious monsters; but disdaining to abuse his superiority, and unwilling to become a tyrant, the most timid and feeble animals approach and surround him, with all that confidence which benevolence and humanity inspires.

On the banks of the Senegal, there may often be seen troops of forty and fifty elephants together; they seem to form but one family, and the most perfect unanimity reigns among them; attentive observation may even trace an apparent respect and veneration for those who have become old; reciprocal kindness and attention towards each other, and to their young they appear indulgent and affectionate.

A memoir of a voyage to Galam, which was given me by M. de Repentigny, as well as four journals communicated to me by Messrs. d'Erneville and l'Amiral, the former a captain of the African battalion, and the

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latter a merchant, who had both in 1780, made for the second time these painful journies, the exact similarity of this memoir and these journals, with the various notes which I have collected, induce me confidently to affirm that the preceding narration is precisely true.

But hitherto, the traveller who proceeds to Galam by the river, has been unable to enjoy all the charms of so many novel and astonishing objects; tormented with the delays, the obstructions, and the difficulties of such a painful and tedious navigation; destitute of every thing which can render it more agreeable, oppressed by a burning atmosphere, conscious of the danger of the putrid and malignant diseases which threaten him, his impatience, his inquietude, and above all the speculations which induced him to undertake the voyage, all conspire, to absorb the very faculties of his soul and mind.

It cannot therefore be expected, that, till some precautions and some better concerted arrangements for rendering this passage less tedious, less dangerous, and more agreeable than at present, shall become objects of solicitude to the government, that natural philosophy, natural history, geography, national indusrry, nay even moral philosophy, or rational philanthropy, can be advantageously benefited by the exclusive and independent possession of one of the greatest rivers in the world; a river which flows through an immense extent of rich, fertile, and populous countries, which may be considered astotally new to Europeans, and which, at every step presents objects in the highest degree interesting to curiosity and observation,

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From what I have already said of the river of the Senegal, it will be presumed that there remains to be said yet much more. I am unable to present any thing beyond a faint outline of a picture, which, if considered in all its details, would itself form a very considerable work, and far beyond the limits which I must give to this book; but necessiated to observe the promise which I have made, I shall now proceed to make some observations on the commerce of the gum, and as the Moors who sell us this valuable commodity now become so necessary to Europe, and which forms one of the principal objects of the commerce of the Senegal.

The principal markets for gum, are the confines of the desert and Podhor, both of which are situated on the banks of this river.

On account of the numerous windings of the Senegal, the passage from the island St. Louis to the confines of the desart, is upwards of thirty leagues, while in a direct line, the distance between these two points is not estimated at more than twenty leagues. But it has been already shewn that the Senegal follows a winding course, from which circumstance it results, that it never presents a direct line for more than five leagues, and that it often divides itself into many branches or arms, which form a number of islands sometimes of a remarkable size, I shall, however, only notice such as would be favourable to those attempts at free cultivation, spoken of in the first chapter of this work.

Between the bar of the Senegal and the confines of the desart, to the East of the main course of the river, are first observed the islands of Sorr, of Guyagou, and

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Douroumou, which form together a surface of ten square leagues. We next arrive at the island of Biffeche which is 24 leagues in length from North to South, and five of medial breadth from East to West. This large island is intersected by two streams of water one of which is denominated the Marigot, or Branch of Gios, the other the Marigot of Beguio; they are both arms of the river, which bears the name of Saguerai, and forms the eastern limits of the island of Biffeche, the surface of which is a hundred and twenty square leagues, while its meridianal point is not distant more than two leagues from the island St. Louis.

On the right bank of the principal course of the river, are situated the islands of Thiong, Wood Island, (*l'île au Bois*,) the islands of Griel, and that of Gazelles, the whole of which is fourteen leagues in length by a medial breadth of two leagues, thus forming a surface of eight-and-twenty square leagues. The meridianal point of the island of Thiong, is also a very small distance from the island St. Louis.

Thus the metropolis of this government, has at its command islands sufficiently approximate, as to render its protection and its superintendance over them, certain and undeviating; these island form together a surface of one hundred and fifty-eight square leagues, and are fertile and populous; they are likewise advantageously situated for any attempts at cultivation which may be undertaken, and their inhabitants would be more particularly disposed to concur in these enterprizes, first from their connections with us being more frequent, and their concerns more direct; and secondly, from the indispensable measuresof protection which these island s

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would require, they would hence be rescued from the insults and pillages of the Moors, whose victims they incessantly become.

Before mentioning the desert, some notice must be taken of the Marigot of the Maringouins, which is thus denominated, on account of the immense number of musquitoes with which it is infested.

This Marigot is a branch of the river, which empties itself into the sea, at a village called Inguyagher. Its length is about three leagues; its channel is deep and will carry vessels of sixty tons burthen: the flood tide enters here, and completely fills it; its borders are covered with trees, and it is distant about sixteen leagues from the island St. Louis, twelve from the confines of the desert, and six from the island of Serinpalé, which is situated at that part, where the river, not being more than two leagues from the sea, suddenly changes its constant and general direction from East to West, and assumes a new one as far as its mouth, following in a parallel manner; the shores of the sea, from which it is separated only by a tongue of sand, whose size diminishes more and more in approaching the bar.

It is a circumstance very singular and remarkable in the Senegal, that this river has a constant repugnance at mingling its waters with those of the ocean, and even where it does enter itself into the sea, it appears as if against its inclination, for instead of this circumstance taking place as usual in the directionof the last part of its course, it is from one of its banks, while the line



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from the middle of its mouth, is perpendicular to its last direction.

Some persons have been of opinion that the Marigot of the Maringouins, was formerly the mouth of the Senegal, but this prejudice no one can feel who has any knowledge of the different places; for the direction of this Marigot is obviously towards the North-east, nor is its depth any thing equal to that of the river near the bar; this branch can therefore be regarded only as one of those accidental variations, which are so prodigiously frequent along the whole of its course from the rock Felow to the sea.

The bed of the Senegal from the island of Serinpalé to the bar, has been the tedious labour of many successive ages, and it is very probable that when this part of western Africa shall be more attentively observed and more regularly studied, many of those dubious and controverted points, which it so frequently presents to us, will be finally determined.

The desert where one of the principal markets for the gum is held, is situated on the borders of the Senegal, and it is here where the Moors of Trarshaz, bring the gum from the forest of Sahel, which is from twenty-eight to thirty leagues distant.

The fort and village of Podhor, the Escale of Cok, and the Red Kennel, (*Terrier Rouge*,) are the places where the gum-merchants assemble from the forests of Alfatack and El-Hiebar, where it is worked by the the Moors, Brachknaz, and the Moors Ouled-El-Haghi

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or Darmanko, which is distant from the northern bank of the Senegal about thirty or forty leagues.

The distance from the confines of the desert, to the fort of Podhor, is about seven leagues in a direct line, but following the windings of the river, it is near forty leagues; and what proves the extreme level nature of the lands between Podhor and the sea, is that near the fort the tide is yet perceptible.

It would be superfluous here to enter into any details relative to the construction of buildings, and defences for the fort of Podhor, which possesses in a supreme degree every possible imperfection; the object of this fort which is garrisoned by forty soldiers, is to protect the gum trade, to maintain our connections with the Moorish tribes Brachknaz and Ouled-El-Haghi Darmanko, and to restrict the Siratick or King of the Foulhas Peuls.

In 1786, this fort which was in a state of dilapidation would have required great repairs, but it would now be better to construct it in another place, and on a different principle. In fact this establishment is indispensable.

The most remarkable circumstances of the course of the Senegal, between the desert and Podhor, are those of its receiving in this interval the waters of the branches and lakes of Paniefoule and Cayar, the first of which is situated on its right bank and the latter on its left.



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## CHAP. VI.

### OF THE GUM TRADE OF THE SENEGAL.

*Of the nature of gum, and its use in commerce—The gum of the Senegal the best of all hitherto known—Description of the gum tree—Sold on the banks of the Senegal by three Moorish tribes who inhabit the Southern parts of Zaara. They collect it in three forests of Acacia; gum trees situated in the grand desart of Barbary about thirty or forty leagues from the right bank of the Senegal—They are denominated Sahel, Al-Fatack, and El-Hiebar—The forest of Sahol is worked by the tribe of Trarshaz, that of Al-Futack by the tribe of Brachknaz, and that of El-Hiebar by the tribe of Ouled-El-Haghi-Darmanko — In what manner and at what period the Moors collect the gum —Three forests produced in* 1786 *and* 1787 *one million pounds of gum, a part of which passed into the hands of the English through Arguin and the great and little Portendick—Conduct of the English towards the Moors whilst they were masters of the Senegal— We have not been so active and sagacious as the English—Our commerce might procure one million pounds of gum from the countries watered by the Sene-*

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*gal—The price at which the Moors sell the gum, and what may be their profits on this merchandize—The gum of the Senegal is a very wholesome and substantial nourishment—The government ought to act with some degree of policy, in order to attach to them the Moors who frequent the Senegal—The inveterate hatred and dissensions between the tribe of Trarshaz, and those of Brachknaz and Darmanko—War between the tribes in 1786, and a victory gained by the Brachknaz over the Trarshaz, and the death of Hilly-Koury their king.*

SINCE the abolition of slavery and the slave trade, by the French in our colonies, the gum of the Senegal (so denominated by the merchants) has been one of the principal objects, and indeed the most valuable commodity which is here held forth to commercial speculation.

It has already been seen that France, by possessing the exclusive advantage of navigating this river, of proceeding up it as far as local circumstances will permit, of forming as many establishments as may be advantageous, and of trafficing along the whole extent freely and quietly, renders herself secure in every enterprize which she may undertake; she has likewise the opportunity of being able to extend her relations, as far as she pleases towards the centre of Africa, with a degree of secrecy, which will keep every rival nation ignorant of her proceedings, and hence secure her from any contradiction on their part, together with the advantage of sheltering the commerce of one of the greatest rivers in the world from the bold cupidity of



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interlopers. With regard to the commerce of the gum, the possession of this river enables them also to procure from the countries, which it irrigates, a sufficient quantity to supply abundantly all the markets of Europe.

Gum is a concrete vegetable juice, which oozes from clefts in the bark of certain trees, either naturally or by incision, and which afterwards coagulates.

This substance is employed in a number of trades; it is indispensible in almost every process of dying, and in the manufacture of printed cottons; it is used in silks, ribbons, lawns, gauzes, cambrics, and hats; it is also necessary in medical and confectionary preparations; the painter and the gilder are compelled to use it, as well as many other trades too numerous to mention. This matter, which to so many useful qualities, joins also the invaluable advantage of being a wholesome and substantial nutriment, was formerly brought from Arabia to Marseilles by way of Egypt.

When the Europeans began to frequent Arguin, Portendick, and the Senegal, the Moors doubtless offered to them their gum; but at that period the gum of Arabia was the only one in request, and it was not till the commencement of the seventeenth century, that the Dutch introduced that of the Senegal into Europe.

When the French became masters of this river, and of the harbours of Arguin and Portendick, they were not long in discovering, that in the meridianal parts of the great desart of Zaara, near the Senegal, amidst sandy and uncultivated countries, there existed three considerable forests of gum trees. They immediately caused the places where the forests were found

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to be reconnoitred, and even the forests themselves were attentively examined. They hence observed, that the distance between them and the northern bank of the river, and the harbours of Arguin and Portendick, were sufficiently near to admit of this commodity being conveniently transported thither; the gum was procured, and experiments made, which sufficiently proved, that it might rank with the best gums of Arabia; the French then trafficed in this merchandize, and brought it into repute.

Towards the close of the last century, the merchants of Bourdeaux and Nants made some new comparative experiments on the gum of the Senegal, and it was decided, that it was far superior to all gums brought from the East, even that of Arabia; that it was more mucilaginous and adhesive; and that in many arts, trades, and various operations, its essential qualities were so great, as to render it incapable of being supplanted by any other, and consequently it soon became possessed of an exclusive preference.

These experiments were made public; they stamped a value on the gum collected by the Moors of Zaara, and sold by our merchants of the Senegal; it became celebrated, and for these last thirty years has been in general request.

It was nearly about the same period, that a sort of taste, and even luxury, began to spread itself in all ranks of society; the manufactures of silks, gauzes, lawns, and printed cottons, became more numerous; in all of these gum was principally used; the exportation of this substance became considerable, and at the

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present moment it is one of the most important articles of commerce.

It will be seen that the government of the Senegal may export into Europe near two million pounds of this merchandize; to collect this, and convey it into France, would require a large capital, vessels, sailors, and other seafaring people. This quantity of gum, at the average price of thirty-five sols per pound, will produce a sale of three millions five hundred thousand livres, and a profit of near three millions.

We should not therefore neglect such an important branch of commerce; it was, however, sold in 1783, to a company whose least vice was that of being unenlightened. This invaluable branch of a lucrative commerce withered away, and perished, in the unskilful hands of those who possessed it; and the English, who unceasingly enrich themselves by our negligence, found means, though excluded from the Senegal, to procure for a length of time, by Arguin and Portendick, almost as much gum as we did from our factories in the river; and from 1787, until the period of the revolution, they had even monopolized nearly the whole of this merchandize, which, however, the most simple measures might have directed into our hands.

The public weal, which will not permit these errors and defects to be concealed, has induced me to discuss them, and to enter into those details, which are naturally allied with the history of a commerce necessary to be known in all its extent.

I shall not here relate all the circumstances which it has produced; it has excited the avarice of all the

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commercial nations of Europe, many of which have at different periods established themselves at Arguin and Portendick, in the hope of attracting thither the gum trade.

All these successive establishments have cost considerable sums of money; they have also had but a short existence, and but indifferent success, because all the inconveniences of a difficult and dangerous coast, a security, which the perfidy of the Moors incessantly renders equivocal and precarious, and the hazards of war have at all times been found united, to crush these factories; and in addition to these may be added, that the natural road for the gum of Zaara is along the banks of the Senegal; whence the possessors of this river might always draw hither, even the whole of it, if their conduct were firm, politic, and reasonable.

The English, hitherto our masters in industry and commerce, were possessed of the Senegal during the whole time between 1760 and 1779. They well knew the advantage which the exclusive possession of this river gave them in trading for the gum; and from the moment they entered it, they forbade any of the ships, frequenting Arguin or Portendick, in order that there might be no diversion in the disposing of a merchandize, which ought naturally to take place at the factories of the Senegal.

The tree which yields the gum, known in commerce under the name of the gum of the Senegal, belongs to the genus of Acacias, and is called by the Moors and negroes near the river, when it produces white gum, Uereck, and when it yields red gum, Nebueh.

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These two species of Acacia gum-trees are the most numerous, and are abundantly propagated in the white and moving sands, which form the soil of the countries bordering on the sea from Cape Blanco of Barbary to Cape Verd, and in those which are situated to the North of the course of the Senegal, from Galam to the factory called the Desart.

Many other species of gum-trees are also to be found here; but the Uereck and Nebueb are not only the most valuable, and the most numerous, but three large forests are principally composed of them, and are known under the appellation of Sahel, Al-Fatack, and El-Hiebar, and which are situated at the meridianal extremities of Zaara, or the great desart of Barbary, and nearly at an equal distance from the borders of the Senegal, and the sea.

The Uereck is found in equal plenty in the environs of fort St. Louis of the Senegal, and on the southern banks of this river, as far as Podhor. I have seen it also in the islands of Sorr and Thiong; and in Wood Island; these trees are not connected together, but scattered here and there.

The gum tree of the Senegal is not in general more than eighteen or twenty feet high, and about three feet in circumference; at least, such are, according to the Moors who sell us the gum, the trees which form the three forests of Sahel, Al-Fatack, and El-Hiebar. I have, however, seen gum trees twenty-five and twenty-eight feet high, in the isles of Sorr and Thiong; but the soil here is covered with a bed of vegetable earth, and the trees are very few in number.

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In general also the gum tree is crooked, and has a very irregular, inelegant, and unpleasant appearance: in fact, nearly all these trees are, in the language of the forester, stunted, and the stocks of a year old resemble rather bushes than shrubs.

This effect is doubtless owing to the aridity and deleterious quality of the sandy soil in which they vegetate, but more particularly to the keenness and malignity of the East winds, which prevail here during the whole winter, and consequently prevent them from arriving at their full perfection.

The leaves of this tree are alternate and bifed, very small, and of a dry, dirty green; the branches are thorny from the part where the leaves project; the flowers are white and very short; the trunk is full, hard, and dry, and the bark smooth, and of a dark green colour.

Those who wish for a more detailed information, relative to the gum trees of the Senegal, may consult the works of M. Adanson, of the Academy of Sciences, who visited and resided in the Senegal upwards of fifty years in the capacity of a naturalist.

He has given a description of every species of gum tree which is to be found in the countries comprised between the twentieth and the fourteenth degree of North latitude, and from the borders of the Atlantic Ocean, to the eighth longitudinal degree of the island of Ferro.

He also brought with him to France, from the environs of the Senegal forty species of Acacia gum trees, all of which furnished a greater or less quantity of gum.

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The five species of gum trees, which this learned academician principally attended to, during his residence at the Senegal, were the red gum tree Nebueb, the red one of Gonake, and the white one of Suing, all of which he ranges in the class of true Acacias; he likewise observes, "that the white gum tree Uereck, and the white kind called Ded, ought to form another genus. the chief of which should be the gum tree of the Senegal, as its juice forms almost the only nourishment of the Moors, during their tedious travels, in the vast desart of Zaara."

It appears that the three forests already mentioned, and which furnish the gum, we purchase from the Moors, are principally composed of the Uereck and Nebueb, the first of which produces the white gum, and the second the red.

I shall not make any more observations relative to the botany of this tree, which I consider only as producing a valuable merchandize, and as being the principal cause of our relation with the Moors, dispersed in tribes over the great desart of Barbary; it has already been mentioned that these people procure and sell to use the gum.

The Moorish tribes, with whom we keep up a constant intercourse, and who frequent the western banks of the Senegal, for the purpose of disposing to us their gum, are three in number, and are distinguished by the names of Trarshaz, Brachknaz, and Ouled-El-Haghi, or Darmanko.

Some discontented individuals of these three tribes



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have formed themselves into a wandering horde, who live by pillage, extortion, and rapine. These vagabonds are scattered over the coasts on the Atlantic Ocean, between Inguiagher near the Marigot, called by the French the Marigot of the Maringouins, and Cape Bojador, situated in 26° 30′ North latitude.

This ferocious horde makes it a custom to watch for shipwrecks; their spies are planted along the whole of the coast, which is more than a hundred leagues in extent, and correspond with each other by signals; when a vessel, which they themselves often mislead by false signs, approaches imprudently towards the land, and there runs aground, these savages plunder the ship thus wrecked, seize the unfortunate wretches who are thrown upon the coast, treat them with disgusting barbarity, and either throw them into captivity, or sell them to neighbouring hordes, who carry to Morocco.

Even in 1787, they sold some captives to the son of the Emperor of Morocco, who had been separated from his father by a revolt, and lived disgraced as a fugitive, in Gualata, the great oasis of the desart, a hundred leagues from the Senegal.

The manners and customs of this barbarous clan are as savage and ferocious as the life which they lead. The reader may find some dreadful details in the accounts of Messrs. Brisson and Saulnier, who were both at different periods shipwrecked on these inhospitable coasts, and thrown into captivity by these cruel and pitiless wretches. I was then in Africa, and a short time after these disasters, an account of them reached the island of the Senegal.



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This wandering horde is denominated the Tribe of Thieves. The Brachknaz, the Darmanko, and the Trarshaz, never mention them under any other name; even they themselves do not blush at adopting this detestable appellation; nay, it is even with the title of the *Chief of the Tribe of Thieves* that the Moor, whom those savages acknowledge as their head, introduces himself to the Governor of the Senegal.

Strange and cruel ignorance of barbarity, which supposes there exists a natural right to plunder and enslave the unfortunate victims of the winds and waves!

The tribe of Trarshaz in particular cultivate the friendship of this horde of thieves, because the Moors Trarshaz were in the habit of encamping in the environs of the river St. John, and in the bays of Arguin and Portendick, where they sell a part of their gum.

The administration of the Senegal gives also to this chief of the robbers annual presents, under the name of customs, to induce the vagabond Moors, who form this tribe, to save individuals who were wrecked on the coasts which they frequented, and bring them to St. Louis. The English gave for every slave of this kind two guineas a head.

It must not be thought humiliating, thus to treat with a sort of distinction, the chief of a band of robbers; the administration of the Senegal ought even to maintain, with this savage horde, a regular intercourse, and conclude with its chief, a treaty which should have for its object, the safety of all those whom the dangers of the sea might place within their power; such a treaty would be consistent with the duties of humanity.

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In 1788, I represented these advantages to M. de la Luserne, then minister of marine, and I explained to him, that it would be very easy by means of an annual present of about twenty guineas to the chief, and principal Moor of this wandering tribe, to induce them not only to save such unfortunate individuals, as are often shipwrecked on this desart coast, but to conduct them safe to the government of the Senegal, for a ransom of two or three guineas which might be paid for each of these deplorable victims of ignorance and fatality. But the revolution which begun in 1789, deferred the execution of a plan which this minister had with much humanity adopted.

I know not whether it has since been performed; if it has not, it is the duty of government that it should be; and by such a philanthropic proceeding, which should be extended to shipwrecks of whatsoever nation they may be, they would in some measure alleviate the misfortunes, which rapid tides, extensive sand banks, and a generally low and dangerous coast, render but too frequent.

After this digression on the horde of Moorish thieves, let us now return to the three tribes who collect and dispose of the gum.

The possession, the enjoyments, and the commerce, of the southern countries of Zaara, which are situated to the North of the course of the Senegal, and extend from the mouth of this river to the longitude of Galam, seem to have belonged for many centuries, to the Moors-Trarshaz, Brachknaz, and Ouled-El-Haghi, commonly known under the name of Darmanko.



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These three tribes have establishments fixed in some of the habitable parts of the vast desart of Zaara; the oases which they occupy, are near two hundred leagues distant from the Senegal in the interior of the desart.

It is the same with Zaara, as with the desart of the Thebaide, only the oases of the grand desart of Barbary, are less considerable, and less agreeable than those of the Thebaide; they are at a great distance from each other; some springs of fresh water are here favourable to vegetation; palm and date trees, with others of the same genus, flourish, and produce fruits of nutritious substances; but the shade which they offer, is, as it were more valuable then their production.

This shade and these springs, have permitted the formation of fine pasturages, which, from the assiduity of the Moors, have become very extensive, and they feed on them goats, oxen, camels, and horses.

According to the Moors, the three tribes of Trarshaz, Brachknaz, and Darmanko, occupy seven oases, the three principal of which, have become the centre of the interest, and concerns of each respective tribe.

The territory possessed by the Trarshaz, has for its limits, the Atlantic Ocean to the West, the course of the Senegal as far as the bar to the South, the branch of Enderer, and the lake of Cayar to the East, and to the North a line unknown, and doubtless indefinite.

This tribe occupies three oases, to which they retire with their flocks, their horses, and their camels, during the rainy season; while the fine months last, they encamp themselves in the environs of the river, on the banks of the branch of Enderer, and of the lake Cayar;

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the forest of Sahel, and some salt mines are found in the territory of this tribe.

The principal oasis, or capital of the Trarshas, is denominated Hoden, but the Moors are so mysterious with regard to their places of residence, where they retire during the rainy season, they answer any questions relative to them, with such laconic reserve, and in such an ambiguous, obscure, and concise manner, that it is impossible to obtain any certain information on these interior parts of the desart, which they inhabit and call their country.

The English have been more indefatigable than ourselves, in collecting facts relative to Zaara, and from them it appears, that the oases of this desart occupied by the three tribes, who sell us the gum, are situated between the eighteenth and twenty-second degrees of North latitude, and between the ocean and seventh longitudinal degree of the island of Ferro; the territories occupied by the Brachknaz, and the Ouled-El-Haghi, have for their southern limits, the northern banks of the Senegal; to the East, they are bounded by Ludamar, to the West by the territory of the Trarshaz, and to the North, like this last mentioned tribe, by an indeterminate line.

These two last tribes who are in some degree related, since they proceed from the same stock, possessed four oases, and the forests of Al-Fatack, and El-Hiebar; there are also many salt mines in their territory.

It is said that the forest of Sahel is exclusively possessed by the Trarshaz. This forest consists entirely of white gum trees, which produce the most valuable



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gum, from its purity and transparency. It is situated twenty leagues to the East of Portendick, and twenty-five to the North-east of the part of the river, frequented by the Trarshaz. In 1787, this forest possessed an additional importance as it enabled the Trarshaz, to keep up a very active correspondence with the French of the Senegal, as well as with the English, who since the treaty of 1782, had continued to frequent all the neighbouring harbours.

It will not certainly be superfluous here to acquaint the reader, with the conduct and policy of the English, relative to the gum trade, while they were masters of the Senegal, and even after they lost that superiority.

In 1763, when the treaty of Versailles secured to them the exclusive possession of the commerce of this river, and of the island St. Louis, which they had acquired during the seven years war, when the skill of their plenipotentiaries enveloped in obscurity, and disguised in an enigmatical manner, the right which France expected, and wished to reserve, of trading conjointly with them to the bays of Arguin, and great and little Portendick, this ever enterprising, but still more, able nation, then know how to profit by our weakness.

She had become sole proprietor of the commerce of the Senegal, and she wished to enjoy it alone and undisturbed. She did not suffer it for a moment to become a question, whether the right which France thought herself possessed of, to trade along the coast comprised between Cape Blanco of Barbary, and the bar of the Senegal, and to frequent the bays situated between the two points, really existed; she preremptorily decided,



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that we had *not* this right, and that the equivocal construction of the article by which we imagined ourselves to have reserved this privilege, could not be interpreted in our favour.

The English, therefore stationed armed vessels along these coasts, with orders to fire upon all vessels which might attempt to approach, of whatever nation they might be, not even excepting their own merchantmen.

By this boldness they at once decided the question, and destroyed the ambiguity of this article of the treaty of 1763, in which our supposed rights were so badly stipulated, and so poorly explained. The interpretation, however, by means of the cannon, had every desired effect; they no longer protested against this bold proceeding, and no one presumed to contradict it.

The English, confident that we dare not molest them, evacuated and demolished all the expensive establishments, which we had formed at Arguin and Portendick; they forbade all their merchants from frequenting these harbours; and armed vessels was maintained, to enforce this order, whose object was certainly rational and well-worthy an intelligent nation; from this proceeding resulted first, economy in their expenditure, and a freedom from all the inconveniences, and embarrassments, which were necessarily incumbent upon the safety, maintenance, and protection of these establishments; and secondly, the great facility in receiving the gum from the forest of Sahel, which the Trarshaz were compelled to bring *in toto* to the river, and it was no longer thought of conveying it to Arguin

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or Portendick, while the English remained masters of the Senegal.

We obtained again the possession of this river after having driven them from it in 1779, and the peace of 1783, re-established us in all our rights. It therefore only remained for us to adopt the same wise and reasonable conduct which the English had before done. The success of the commander Suffren, had restored the courage and glory of our navy, which now began to be feared and respected. Admirals Bouillé, d'Estaing, and others, had made the French flag triumphant in the Antilles, and our auxilliary army, under the command of M. de Rochambeau, had decided the independence of the United States of America; England, therefore, had learned to dread us, and we were hence enabled to hold a firmer language at Versailles, in 1783, than we had done in 1763, though the treaty we then made was not so advantageous as it ought to have been, and as it easily might have been.

When this peace was made, our ministers seemed to have forgotten that our influence was, in a manner of speaking, null and void along all the western coasts of Africa, comprised between the Streights of Gibraltar and Cape Palmas.

Far from endeavouring to give to our commerce such privileges as might put it in equilibrio with that of England, they stipulated no one individual condition, which could be of advantage to it: the English, on the contrary, who never forget any thing, and who were more attentive than we had been at the peace of 1763, well

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anew how to preserve to herself, in a clear and decided manner, the right of trading conjointly with us to Arguin and Portendick; we had not the firmness to refuse this, and to defend, as they had done, the importance of the advantages conceded to us by the exclusive possession of the Senegal: nay a short time afterwards, we ourselves opened to them the means of a dangerous diversion.

During the years 1779, 1780, 1781, and 1782, we were the sole masters of the coasts of the Senegal; during this time no English vessels navigated there; and we should have taken advantage of this period of uncommon superiority, to have attached to us Hilly-Koury, then king of the Trarshaz. This Moor regretted the English; he loved them; and we should have endeavoured to make him forget them, and induce him to continue the custom, which his tribe had adopted, of conveying all the gum from the forest of Sahel, to the confines of the desart; but far from this, we, in spite of reason, and with an incredible negligence, re-established a road, which the ability of the English had so carefully destroyed, and in 1781 and 1782, French vessels were seen trading for gum at Portendick, and this not as interlopers, but with special letters of commission, issued from the marine office, and by an immediate order from the minister.

Some years afterwards, another circumstance occurred still more singular. They had by accident conceded the exclusive privilege of the gum trade to a society at Paris, and at the same time they gave private permissions to foreign merchants to trade for this article, in

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those harbours which should have been abandoned and forgotten. It is true, that at this period the helm of our maritime affairs was no longer in the hands of M. de Sartine, who for such a length of time had held it with so much glory and advantage to France.

If circumstances should ultimately prevent us from attaining the exclusive use of the bays comprised between Cape Mirick and the bar of the Senegal, we must at least employ all our influence over the tribe of Trarshaz, to induce them to bring all the gum from the forest of Sahel to the factory of the desart; and if even to obtain this end, we should find ourselves compelled to augment, by some thousands of francs, the presents and imposts paid to the king of the Trarshaz, and the principal officers of this tribe, let it not be neglected, for we shall be amply indemnified by the increased quantity of gum which will hence be brought for sale.

According to authentic traditions among the Moors of the southern countries of Zaara, and preserved from generation to generation by the Marabouhts, who are their priests, the tribe of Brachknaz, and that of Ouled-El-Haghi, formerly constituted only one body of men. It is said that about four centuries ago, a colony of Ouled Moors, who inhabited a very considerable oasis under the tropic of Cancer, between the tenth and fifteenth degree East of the island of Ferro, quitted their native lands, and conducted by a chief called Amar-Abdallah, established themselves in a habitable country a hundred leagues to the North of the forests of Al-Fatack and El-Hiebar. The Ouled-Moors

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were also denominated Brachknaz; and from that time they appropriated to themselves the territory comprised between that of the Trarshaz and Ludamar tribes, they worked the forests of Al-Fatack and El-Hiebar, as well as many salt mines, which are situated in these sandy desarts.

Amar-Abdallah, the chief of this colony, had two sons, whom he portioned in his life time, by dividing the Ouleds-Brachknaz into two tribes, and giving one to each of them. The first preserved the name of Brachnaz, and had for their chief Ali-Agrichy, the eldest son of Amar, whose posterity was very numerous, and from whom descended Hamet Moktar, who was in 1787 king of the Brachknaz, and acknowledged at the same time as the chief of the two tribes.

It was doubtless, by the right of primo-geniture, that the Brachknaz appropriated to themselves the possession of the forest of Al-Fatack, which from its proximity to the Senegal, and the fort of Podhor, not being above thirty leagues distant, has become a situation more important and more pleasant than that of El-Hiebar; in this forest, also, the species of white gum-trees predominates.

The second tribe had for its chief, Aghi-Darmanko, second son of Amar-Abdallah; and in order to distinguish himself from the Brachknaz, he retained his primitive name of Oulad, and added to it El-Aghi-Darmanko. The negroes in general mention the Moors of this tribe under the name of Darmanko. They had for their patrimony the forest of El-Hiebar, which consists principally of red gum trees, and they are established in two oases, situate about eighty leagues to the North-east of this forest.

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This tradition is generally received among the Moors and negroes on the banks of the Senegal, and they will doubtless never consider it in any other light. This is however certain, that the tribe of Darmanko have always had an undeviating respect for, and attachment to, the Brachknazians; their chiefs always displayed the greatest deference for Hamet-Moktar, chief of the last-mentioned tribe, and acknowledged him as the king, general of the nation, and father of the family of the Agrichys. On every occasion, the interests of these two tribes are always united together, always included in the same treaties, and the king of the Brachknazians alone discusses, acts, and includes every thing for these allied tribes, without ever experiencing any opposition or reproach on the part of the Moors of Darmanko.

The forest of El-Hiebar, which belongs to these Moors, is situated more to the North than the two others; it is about thirty-two leagues from the borders of Cok, and the fort of Podhor, forty leagues from the confines of the desart, thirty leagues from Portendick, sixty from Arguin, and twenty-five from the river St. John, which empties itself into the sea near Cape Mirick, and the possession of which the English retained to themselves by the treaty of 1782.

The situation of this forest is favourable to the English, because it is nearer one part of the various bays on the coast of Barbary, the use of which they have retained, than to our establishments on the river. If I have entered into some details on the common origin of the Brachknazians, and the Darmankos, it has principally arisen from my wish, to elucidate clearly

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that it will always be in our power to prevent any diversion of the gum of El-Hiebar, towards the river of St. John, or to Portendick, by simply attaching to us, the chief or king of the Brachknazians; an event which depends solely on certain arrangements and treaties, which would be favourable to the two tribes of which he is general.

If our conduct and proceedings, with regard to this Moorish king, be always conformable to our real interests, and to a just and reasonable policy, it may be considered as certain, that the produce of the gum trees of the two forests of Al-Fatack and El-Hiebar, will always be carried to the borders of Cok, near the fort of Podhor; and in that case it would require a singular series of disastrous events, and a conduct highly impolitic, to induce these two tribes, whose interests are inseparable, to abandon the river, and convey their gum to the coast.

I shall now proceed to make some observations on the manner and time in which the Moors collect the gum, from the three forests, and the period when they encamp themselves on the right bank of the Senegal, for the purpose of selling to us this commodity.

It is well known, that the western countries of Africa, comprised between the tenth degree of North latitude, and the tropic of Cancer, and between the first and twenty-fifth longitudinal degree East of the island of Ferro, do not receive the tropical rains till towards the beginning of July. This law of nature is almost invariable, and it seldom happens, that in the



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countries watered by the Senegal, that the rainy season begins much before the first of July, or that it is prolonged beyond the first days of November.

It is also pretty well known what are called rainy seasons, between the tropics; when this time commences, the waters of the heavens fall in torrents on the earth; the heat is humid and stifling; storms unceasingly succeed each other, and the rivers swell and overflow all the low lands, which surround them; all the shallows are quickly deluged, and the Senegal receives such a prodigious access of water, that its level is elevated upwards of twenty feet; its overflowings are extensive as those of the Nile in Egypt; its smooth and tranquil course become rapid and impetuous, and no vessel can any longer proceed up it but by means of towing; the waters of the sea, which during the preceding months, had entered, and given the river a brackish taste, as far as forty leagues from its mouth, can no longer enter, and fresh water may be procured even near the bar.

It may, I think, be confidently asserted, that the regions irrigated by the Senegal and the Gambia, receive during the rainy season a mass of water three times more considerable than the most humid countries in France absorb during a whole year.

When the lands have been abundantly saturated, by these heavy rains; when the waters begin to disappear, and when the sands begin to dry, which is towards the 15th of November, then also we may perceive oozing from the trunk, and principal branches of the gum trees, a gummy juice, which at first has no consistency,

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but trickles down the trees; at the end, however, of fifteen days this juice becomes inspissated, adhering to the incision whence it issued, sometimes twisted in a vermicular form, but most commonly in round or oblong drops: these are white when proceeding from the white gum tree, and of a yellowish orange colour, bordering a little on the red, when proceeding from the red gum tree.

The drops are always transparent, and brilliant at the part where they are broken off; when they are held for a short time in the mouth, they possess all the clearness, transparency, lustre, and limpidity of the finest rock crystal.

These gummy exudations are entirely natural, and the Moors solicit them by no kind of artifice, or any sort of incision.

These precautions would indeed be superfluous, because the variations of the atmosphere in the season immediately succeeding that of the heavy rains, alone increases infinitely the clefts on the surface of the bark, and by means of these, which answers every purpose, the gums find a natural and easy passage.

Towards the 10th of November, the easterly winds begin to prevail, or rather those of the North-east. These winds are dry and blighting; they are burning two-thirds of the day, and cold during the night and morning.

This North-east wind (in the Senegal improperly called an easterly wind) passes over those immense sandy plains, which border on the West of Egypt, and



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afterwards crosses the spacious desart of Zaara. This wind is what the Arabs and the Moors call *Samiel* or *Cimoon*, and which in other parts of Africa bears the name of Harmatans: its pestiferous and malignant qualities are well known.

This wind, before it reaches the banks of the Senegal, doubtless loses those dangerous qualities which it possesses in the desart; for in the countries bordering on the island of St. Louis, though it may be inconvenient from its keenness and activity, yet it never occasions any diseases; but on the contrary, the violent fevers which are produced by the bad season, generally cease when the North-east wind begins to prevail. It is, however, arid and devouring; it absorbs, so completely dissipates, and above all so suddenly the humidity of inanimate bodies, that they have not time to adapt themselves to the vacuum occasioned by this unexpected and rapid desiccation; hence the adhesion of the particles of these bodies is compelled to separate.

I have seen pieces of wainscot split suddenly with a considerable detonation, and glass goblets break in half; a walnut tree ruler, of four lines in thickness, split exactly in the middle, with a noise similar to a strong electric explosion.

From hence may easily be conceived, the effect which these arid and piercing winds must have on the bark of the gum trees, which is naturally slender and smooth; consequently the apertures are very numerous, and the gum exudes from all parts in profusion.

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The drops are in general about the size of a small partridge's egg; there are also, occasionally, some both larger and smaller; I had one, which was five inches and a half long, by a medial breadth of four inches: these variations are however very rare.

If the gum of the Senegal did not possess an essential tenacious quality, the keenness and rapidity of the East wind would infallibly detach the half formed drops from the trees, which would then be blown along by the wind, and covered with sand; hence the produce would be less pure, less valuable, and more difficult to collect: this, however, never happens, for the drops adhere firmly to the bark, near the apertures from whence they issued.

On the other side, if the easterly wind did not increase the number of incisions, and thus open an infinity of passages, by which the gum might transpire, the drops would become more scarce, and at the same time proportionably large; hence their weight would overcome their tenacity; they would fall to the earth, and be buried in the sand, which would render the stowage of them in the holds of the gum ships not only more difficult, but also more bulky.

Thus, whoever attentively observes, will every where perceive, that He, who has created nature, and incessantly conducts her operations, has ordained every thing for the best.

About the beginning of December, the three Moorish tribes quit those habitations which they have formed in the vast solitudes of Zaara, and where they have col-



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lected their families, their flocks, their camels, and their wealth, and each tribe begins his march towards their respective forests of gum trees.

At the different oases, they suffer to remain only decrepid old men, imbecile women, children, and young girls; all those who are employed in tending the flocks, in educating the horses and camels, and other indispensible occupations; the black slaves are also left behind.

All the rest form an immense army, the disposition of which is equally confused and savage; it is a wild assemblage of men women, young girls and boys, children at the breast, and an innumerable number of camels, oxen, and goats.

The kings, princes, and the rich people, mount their horses, and their camels; others ride on oxen, and some again proceed on foot.

After a march of twelve or fifteen days each tribe arrives at its respective forest, and at the borders of which they pitch their tents.

The harvest continues about six weeks, and when the gum, thus collected, is properly formed, and every thing in readiness, they prepare to strike their tents and proceed to the banks of the Senegal. They load the gum on camels and oxen; the ordinary burthen of a camel is from four to five hundred pounds, while that of an ox, is generally about a hundred and fifty; the gum is put into immense leathern sacks made of tanned ox hides.



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All the gum which is thus collected, and packed up, is not placed all at once on the beasts of burthen who are to convey it to the banks of the river and to the different markets where it is sold; the chiefs of the tribes alone proceed to these markets, accompanied by a certain number of the principal Moors, who always are, or pretend to be, relations of the kings, or of their favourite women; they are followed by an escort of armed men.

The king and the principal officers of the Trarshaz, treat for their tribe separately; while the king and principal men of the Brachknaz and the Darmanko, treat for their two tribes conjunctly.

While the chiefs of these tribes are conferring relative to the price at which the gum shall be sold, the Moors remaining behind at the camps, load their cargoes and commencing their march, halt about two days journey from the river; here they wait the conclusion of the conferences between their chiefs and the overseers of the government of the Senegal, and with the French merchants.

These preliminaries superinduce numerous delays, debates, and embarrassments; there is no kind of trick which these Moors do not employ, no lies and imposture which they do not invent, to obtain for their gum, a price much greater than that of the preceding year. The kings and chiefs play off a thousand cheats, and every species of craft, to spunge a greater quantity of presents, and imposts than had been given before; and to obtain this end, menaces and finesse, are successively employed; the most ridiculous and exaggerated pre-

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tensions are every year renewed by these subtle and cunning savages, who make it a practise in all their dealings, to create a multitude of obstacles and difficulties.

It is only the agents and the overseers of the gum trade who with the merchants proceed to the desart and to Podhor for the purpose of purchasing this commodity and they well know that in these savage fairs, much tædium, inconvenience, and bustle must be endured.

The Moors in their roguish dealings, possess a coolness, which distract the whites; their patience and phlegmatic conduct, singularly disconcerts the vivacity of the Europeans, who full of ardor and impatience wish to strike the bargain at once, while the Moors, in order to enlarge the presents, or the profits, incessantly defer a final termination. Meanwhile we also arm ourselves with patience, become cautious, obstinate, and heady, and thus finish by mutual opposition.

When every thing is completely settled on both sides, the Moorish chiefs return to their camps, and announce to their tribes that the market may now commence. They then begin their march, and a few days afterwards they settle on the banks of the river.

It is at this place which the French have named the desart, and which in fact, is one of the most arid, and desolate places in the world, that the gum fair is principally held; it is situated on the borders of the river, at an equal distance from the isle St Louis, and the fort of Podhor, and the Trarshaz, convey thither all the gum procured from the forest of Sahel.

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Here the eye surveys an illimitable plain, formed of white and moving sand; not a single herb, not a plant, nor even a bush destroy the melancholy uniformity, the painful monotony of this immense solitude. It is impossible to procure here, even a drop of good water, and shallops laden with hogsheads, are obliged to be sent a considerable distance up the river to procure it, for at the desart the waters are brackish, they being mingled with those of the sea, which flows in the Senegal, as far as the island of Gick; another reason is, that the sands of the desart, are so fine and so moveable, that it is impossible to dig any wells, without the water being considerably intermingled with sand.

On the morning of the day of their arrival, may be heard at a distance the "hubbub wild" of these Moorish armies, enveloped in a cloud of dust; and towards noon, the immense solitary plain of the desart, where the eye wanders without discovering any object living or vegetating is covered with a numerous multitude of men, women, camels, horses, oxen, and goats.

All the animals are canopied with the leafy branches of the gum-trees, which at once serve to secure them from the ardent heat of the sun, and the gum with which they are laden.

One part of these animals carry the tents and baggage, while on others are heaped the women, who are seen suckling their children, and young kids just littered. The chiefs are mounted on noble horses; some chosen camels, elegantly caparisoned, bear the women of the kings and princes, in a kind of basket, covered with an awning; a troop of Moors, armed with fusils and sagayes,

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which are lances from eight to ten feet high, form the escort of these ambulatory hordes, and vainly endeavour to maintain some degree of order among this barbarous multitude.

The air rings with the acclamations of this innumerable quantity of men, women, children, and animals, and the living creatures which now fill this lately desart plain, appear incalculable. It is impossible to convey a just idea of the disorder and tumult of such a confused assemblage, or to give an accurate picture of the singular uproar, which pervades these barbarous meetings.

When the Moors are all assembled together on the banks of the river, and their tents pitched, and every thing arranged and disposed for commencing the traffic, a cannon is fired as a signal to begin.

Innumerable are the train of disgusting and unpleasant circumstances, which attend these negociations. The agents, as well as the merchants, are incessantly surrounded and pressed by these untutored and perfidious savages; they must be immoveable in the midst of their injuries, their insults, and their menaces; they must endure poignards raised against them, threatening looks, outrageous expressions, and revolting gestures; they must submit to the perpetual importunities of kings and princes, to the insatiable cupidity of their women, and in fact to the oppressive persecutions of all the tribes.

The merchant is now no longer master of his vessel; all the decks of the ships employed in the gum trade, and which are seldom less than a hundred tons burthen, are covered with Moors, crouding on each other to-

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wards the fore of the vessel; the stern is defended by field pieces, and a part of the crew who remain under arms; but in fact it would be too tedious to enter into a detail of all the bitter circumstances endured by those who procure for Europe the gum of the Senegal; such disgusting details, would only detain me in this history of a commerce, which is at once interesting and valuable.

It is said that the India Company, which has been, during more than sixty years in full possession of the government and commerce of that part of the western coast of Africa, known under the name of French Africa, collected annually two million weight of gum, and that they threw into the sea all of that article, which exceeded the supposed demand; in the same manner as the Dutch, did with regard to pepper and other spices, which they collected in the East Indies, who burnt whatever they thought was more than the probable consumption of Europe.

This fact has been declared to me by many well informed merchants of Nantz, Bourdeaux, and Rochelle; and as the commerce of the Senegal, was never better understood, than by this sovereign company, I am very much inclined to believe it.

However it may be, it will be seen that the quantity of this merchandise, forwarded to us by the countries watered by the Senegal, below Galam, might be augmented equal to that attributed to the ancient India company.

During the years 1785, 1786, 1787, the quantity of gum, annually brought to the factories of the desart,

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and the Cok, amounted to eight hundred thousand pounds, besides which the Trarshaz-Moors, conveyed yearly to Portendick, near four hundred thousand pounds, where it was purchased by the English.

Hence the three forests of Sahel, Al-Fatack, and El-Hiebar, furnish yearly a constant produce of at least twelve hundred thousand pounds of gum, and if no part of this be directed into any other channel, this branch of commerce would alone render our factories very important; but if I am not mistaken, it might be augmented still farther.

At the commencement of the year 1784, M. de Repentigny visited a forest of white gum trees, situated some leagues to the North of the Senegal and the lake Goumel, nearly between the fifth and seventh longitudinal degree East of the island of Ferro; it is also in the midst of the white moving sands of Zaara.

This forest is principally composed of that species of white gum-trees, called by the Moors, Ded, and which is one of the five species of Acacia gum-trees, mentioned by M. Adanson.

The ancient India Company, were acquainted with this forest, and intending to collect the gum which it produces, they formed an establishment in the island of Bilbas, opposite a negro village named Guerouf, which is agreeably situated on a small eminence.

The country in which this forest is placed belongs also to the two tribes of Brachknaz and Darmanko, with whom it was therefore become necessary to make a treaty for the purpose of procuring the gum; it was also indispensable to make another with the Foulhas negroes

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whom we call Peuls or Poules, that they might purchase from them, unmolested, provisions and other necessaries for subsistence.

These negociations were concluded, an establishment was formed, and a kind of fort constructed, where the factory was to have been built; the Moors brought thither their gum, but at the moment when they quitted the banks of the river to return to their oases, the Foulhas revolted against the persons sent by the India company; they were persuaded that the factory of Guerouf, by being too favourable to the Moors, would become fatal to them; and without regarding the treaty made by their king or siratick, these Foulhas attacked the factory, broke it open, and massacred a number of individuals, as well as a captain of a vessel belonging to the island St. Louis, who had arrived there with materials for building.

They said that the persons employed, had acted wrong, and had excited the discontent of the negroes; but what is very remarkable, and may be quoted as a proof of the imbecility of these pusillanimous negroes, is, that though they were very numerous, and used every effort to execute their cowardly treason, they could not completely succeed in their design, nor did they massacree all the persons contained in the factory, though they did not amount to more than twelve individuals.

A mulatto of the island St. Louis, named Thevenot, a person employed in the factory, knew so well how to resist, and repel the rage of the Foulhas, who amounted to several thousand, that he succeeded in reaching a



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boat belonging to the company, and on board of which he had conveyed some cannon and swivels; here he embarked the remainder of those who had escaped the first attack of the blacks, and conducted them safely to the island St. Louis.

Thevenot was living at the time when I was in Africa; he was known and esteemed by every body, and used to relate with pleasure, all the circumstances of the noble stand, which he had made at Guerouf, together with particulars of that establishment, which had been abandoned before it was completely formed. They never attempted to re-establish it after this catastrophe. It must indeed be confessed, that such an event was discouraging, and sufficient to induce, for ever, the renunciation of a project, for erecting a factory so distant from the metropolitan isle of the Senegal, and where during eight months of the year, it would be difficult to receive any protection by the river; but it does not appear necessary, that we should expose ourselves to this danger, nor to the expences incumbent upon a fortified establishment.

The principal consequence of this event, is, that we are now well assured, that the forests of gum trees in the environs of Guerouf, offer an annual produce of four hundred thousand pounds of gum, a quantity which the Moors proposed to supply M. de Repentigny with.

But instead of receiving this gum at Guerouf, which is situated on the Senegal, at more than a hundred direct leagues from the island St. Louis, and upwards

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of a hundred and fifty leagues, in following the course of the river, we might easily induce the Moors to convey it to the fort of Podhor, from which this forest is not distant more than fifty leagues, that is to say, it is twenty-five leagues farther off then that of El-Hiebar.

Finally in this same year 1784, M. de Repentigny in concert with M. Durand, then director of the gum-trade, of the Senegal, examined a fifth forest of gum-trees, situated on the right bank of the river, fourteen leagues to the North-east of Galam. The Moors themselves offered to Messrs. Repentigny and Durand, to procure them annually, four hundred thousand pounds of gum, which they would forward to the fort of Galam, at a very moderate price.

M. de Repentigny was recalled in 1785, and M. Durand the year following; the Moors, however, afterwards renewed the same offers. I quitted isle St. Louis in 1787, and am ignorant whether these offers have had any effect; it is not, however, less certain, that by means of the gum forests, in the vicinity of Guerouf and Galam, the commerce of this article might be augmented every year, if they would, by eight hundred thousand pounds, which increase would augment the total quantity of gum, to two million pounds; and this article is daily rendered more important and valuable, by the great increase of luxurious habiliments for the women.

It was from a consciousness of these facts, that I stated in the commencement of the present chapter, that the free and independent possession of this river, might, if properly attended to, give to the French commerce,



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the power to collect a quantity of gum, sufficient to furnish all the principal markets in Europe.

When the consequences of this trade shall be thought worthy of attention, and when it is reflected how great a degree of activity ought to pervade all our concerns with the countries watered by the Senegal, from its mouth to beyond Galam, the details and particulars which I have disclosed, will appear neither indifferent, nor superfluous to those who take any interest in the vigour of our commerce, and who wish to acquire some knowledge in Africa. If those who have visited western Africa, and written upon it, had not treated these subjects too superficially, and in too summary a manner, there would be less uncertainty and obscurity, relative to the greater part of this continent.

The measure usued for selling and purchasing the gum, is a large kind of wooden tub, which is fixed on the deck of the gum vessels, and contains about two thousand pounds. The Moors call this measure kantar and we have adopted the same denomination, which the Saracen Moors used, while they were masters of Spain; and the Portuguese and Spaniards have naturalized it in the southern countries of Zaara. The gum of the Senegal is therefore sold and bought by the kantar.

Each vessel employed in the gum-trade, has its kantar fixed upon the deck. This measure which as has been already observed, is formed like a large tub, has a square aperture of eighteen inches in length, by one

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foot broad at the bottom. To this aperture is affixed a tube of thick sail-cloth, which descends into the hold of the ship. When the gum is measured, the aperture at the bottom of the kantar, is closed by a small board, running in a groove; when the kantar is full, the board is withdrawn and the gum runs through the tube into the hold, where there are persons ready to stow it away.

It may easily be conceived, that an increase in the size of the kantar, might take place imperceptibly, without its being perceived by the Moors, who though sufficiently crafty and cunning, are nevertheless too ignorant to suspect the effect of a few inches in the height or diameter of the these measures; hence they have often been the dupes of our merchants, who understand very well this part of geometry, by which they adapt the capacity of their measures according to their intentions, and enlarge or diminish the kantar when they are going to buy or sell.

All those who purchase gum from the Moors of Zaara, have successively made use of this deception, in order to acquire at the same price, a greater quantity of merchandise, and this kind of measure has become progressively so advantageous to Europeans, that it is now almost quadrupled. At present the kantar contains two thousand pounds of gum, and in the time of the India company, now sixty years ago, it did not contain much more than five hundred pounds.

The Moors are paid for their gum in pieces of calico dyed blue, which is manufactured in India, and is called in the commerce of western Africa, by the name of



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pieces of guinea. These pieces are seven or eight ells long, and half an ell in width. During my residence in Africa, they were considered as an essential and principal part in all the bargains which were contracted, and in fact the Moors would not take any other kind of merchandize in exchange.

It has been attempted in France, to imitate these pieces of guinea, but they were doubtless imperfect, for the Moors were never deceived by them; they possess indeed so quick a sense in this respect, that they can tell immediately if a piece of guinea be fabricated in France or in India, and this discovery is not made either by the feel or the colour; they immediately put the piece to their nose, and ascertain its true quality by the smell. These Indian calicoes, as well as the indigos used by the Indians in dying them, have doubtless a particular smell, which it is impossible to imitate.

During the time which I passed in Africa, the real India pieces of guinea were in high estimation, a preference which nothing could be found to equal, and much less to supersede.

From 1780 to 1787, the Moors have constantly given a kantar of gum weighing two thousand pounds for fifteen pieces of guinea. This commodity has never cost dearer to the gum company established in the Senegal in 1784, and at this price, they annually purchase four hundred kantars, or about eight hundred thousand pounds.

When in 1784, Messrs. Repentigny and Durand, conceived the project of extending the gum-commerce, the

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tribes of Brachknaz and Darmanko, offered to bring two hundred kantars to Guerouf, in the island of Bilbas, and the same quantity to Galam; this altogether would make eight hundred thousand pounds of gum, and for which the Moors only demanded ten pieces of guinea per kantar.

I shall now return to some observations on what may be the possible produce of the gum trade, and the advantages this merchandize may procure to commerce.

It has been seen, that the three forests of Al-Fatack, Sahel, and El-Hiebar, produce twelve hundred thousand pounds of gum, which is sold at the rate of fifteen pieces of guinea per kantar; and the Moors have offered to furnish us with eight hundred thousand weight, in addition, from the forests of Guerouf and Galam, at the rate of ten pieces of guinea per kantar. But let us suppose, that from the expences incurred, in conveying the gum of these two last forests, and to other gratuitous rewards to the tribes of Brachknaz and Darmanko, to induce them to convey it to the fort of Podhor; this gum might also increase to fifteen guinea pieces per kantar, and the two million pounds of gum produced by the five forests, would then require fifteen thousand pieces of guinea.

The value of these India pieces, have experienced many variations; during the American war they cost fifty francs per piece; previous to that period, they had been from nineteen to twenty francs*. In 1787, their

* The franc is nearly the same with the *livre tournois*, and worth about ten-pence.—*Editor.*

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medial value was about twenty-five francs, and I am inclined to believe, this last price may be considered as the average one; hence the general value of a kantar of gum, may be fixed at three hundred and seventy-five francs, which gives nearly three sols, ten deniers per pound; but it may be considered as certain, that it never will exceed four sous the pound.

Towards the close of the last century, this gum was sold in Europe at thirty and forty sols, and sometimes three francs the pound, which may authorize us to suppose, that its average price would be about forty-four sols. It is to be wished that the moderation of the merchants, would fix its price, at the rate of thirty-five sols, for this would be more favourable to many manufactures which employ this substance; and many trades, such as the hatter, for example, who have endeavoured to supply its place by other gums, less adhesive, and less expensive, would naturally return to that of the Senegal, were it more easily procured, and sold at a reasonable price. At the rate of thirty-five sols, the two million pounds of gum procured from the Senegal, would furnish a branch of commerce amounting to three millions five hundred thousand francs, the profits of which would be very considerable, according to the rate at which this substance is procured in Africa; and even should it increase a few farthings per pound, this trade would still offer an enormous return after the expences of procuring it, of expeditions in the river, of establishments and settlements in the island of St. Louis, freight, fitting out, &c. &c. fairly deducted.

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If the administration of the Senegal knew how to manage the Moors of Zaara, and the chiefs of the various black nations who people the southern banks of the river; if they knew how to comport themselves towards them with a well concerted policy, this article would become abundant in our factories, and the trade would be conducted with the utmost facility; and the consequences of this branch of commerce, are surely sufficiently important to merit the consideration of government.

The abundance of gum trees in the vicinity of the island St. Louis, and the banks of the Senegal, is immense. I have pointed out the five great forests of Sahel, Al-Fatack, El-Hiebar, Guerouf, and Galam; but besides these, there are numerous gum trees scattered about in the islands, and circumjacent countries, from which the negroes might easily be induced to make a partial collection of the gum; and even this harvest might also produce, one or perhaps two hundred thousand pounds.

The qualities of this gum are not confined solely to their utility in manufactures, for it is also a very substantial and wholesome nutriment.

When the Moors quit their oases, and encamp themselves round the gum forests of Zaara, the middling and lower classes of these savages, subsist almost entirely on this gum, during the whole of the harvest, their march to the banks of the Senegal, while the traffick is carrying on, and until their return to their principal residences; and experience has proved, that six ounces of this substance is sufficient to support one man for four-and-twenty hours.

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The most temperate and indigent among them, nourish themselves by letting it simply melt in their mouth, while others dissolve it in milk. They also make with this substance combined with the juice or gravy of the flesh of camels, oxen, and even of horses, a large kind of lozenge, which will keep without being spoiled for upwards of a year.

The gum of the Senegal possesses also pectoral qualities. I knew, in the river of Gambia a young Englishman about five-and-twenty years of age, who cured himself of a violent and frequent spitting of blood, by taking daily, no other nourishment than four ounces of this gum dissolved in milk; after having observed this regimen for three months, he was perfectly cured.

The Moorish women and negresses of this part of Africa, use also this substance, with great effect for certain disorders peculiar to the sex; and the Moors make preparations of gum mixed with mill-dust, or Indian corn, and use it in certain circumstances, to nourish their horses and camels.

I have no doubt, but that on some occasions, this gum might be prepared, with the juice of meat, and other substances, so as to make those kind of lozenges, which are called in England portable soup, and which forms an excellent article of subsistence, for any isolated place or fort, exposed to a long seige.

It is proper here to speak of the dissentions and hatred which exists between the Trarshaz and the Brachknaz, and of the advantage which might be hence drawn, in exercising a considerable influence over these barbarians.

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During the time of the India Company, when the ports of Arguin and Portendick, were much frequented, the tribe of Trarshaz Moors held a very high rank, and from the activity of their commerce with the Senegal, and with the bays on the coast, they possessed a superiority and importance, far superior to the tribes of Brachknaz and Darmanko, whose concerns were confined solely to the banks of the river.

This importance of the Trarshaz, and perhaps, also their arrogance, excited the jealousy and hatred of the two other tribes, and these passions were far from being extinguished in the years 1785, 1786, and 1787, during which time I was in Africa.

It has been already observed, that the English while they were masters of the Senegal, destroyed and abandoned the harbours of Arguin and Portendick; but at the same time, they augmented the importance of the fort of Podhor, which they re-erected, and the Brachknaz and Darmanko Moors, acquired a considerable accession of power and importance, by this re-establishment.

They now therefore hoped to revenge themselves on the Trarshaz, who had so long enjoyed a superior importance; they even formed the idea of destroying, if possible, this tribe whom they hated inveterately, whose enemy they had always been, and whom they envied likewise the possession of the forest of Sahel.

The English beheld this determination in its infancy, and even secretly favoured it; subtle politicians, they did not disdain the means of irritating these Moorish hordes, one against the other, and of inspiring them

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with mutual jealousies. They had also some reason to complain of the Trarshaz, who, notwithstanding the vigilance of the English, found means to dispose of the gum to interlopers, who, in contempt of the danger they incurred of being taken or sunk, sometimes presented themselves in the neighbouring harbours.

In 1766, the chief of the Brachknaz died, and Hamet-Moktar his son, by birthright and succession, became chief and king of the two tribes of Brachknaz and Darmanko. This chief detested the Trarshaz, and particularly their king Hilly-Koury.

Hamet-Moktar frequently visited the fort of Podhor, and there he formed connections with Almami, Siratick or King of the Foulhas. Peuls, a nation of negroes numerous and intrepid, who inhabit an extent of upwards of a hundred leagues, on the southern banks of the Senegal.

Hamet-Moktar did not dare to attack the Trarshaz, renowned for their bravery, and commanded by a king full of courage, with the Moors only, of which he was chief; but with the assistance of an army of Foulhas, he hoped to conquer and destroy them.

The English fomented these dissensions, and the quarrels occasioned many battles between them, of which they remained passive spectators, while there was nothing decisive on either side; but when the Trarshaz found themselves hardly pressed, they then offered to support them, compelled the Brachnaz and Darmanko to lay down their arms, and forced these belligerent tribes to make peace; though the English were certain, that their dissensions would never be to-



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tally extinguished, and that war would break out again upon the first occasion. Thus did the English, by this policy, mould to their pleasure these nations, which we have since treated with too much indifference, and even with contempt; for our conduct towards them was calculated to impress them with the idea that we were totally disinterested.

At the time of our re-establishment in the Senegal, we had however some reason to compromise with the Trarshaz Moors, and their King Hilly-Koury, who not only loved the English, and regretted them, but continued to convey to them, at Arguin and Portendick, a part of the gum from the forest of Sahel.

A noble opportunity occurred, by which we might have attached to us this King of the Trarshaz. In 1784, this brave Moor was again threatened by Hamet-Moktar, and the league formed by the Brachknaz and Darmanko, and sustained by Almami, King of the Foulhas. He begged our protection, he solicited our interference, he demanded our help, and a supply of ammunition; but we remained deaf to his prayers, and totally indifferent to a quarrel from which great advantage might have been drawn. In fact, we were, in 1786, the idle and useless spectators of an explosion which had been many years fermenting.

In 1785, Hamet-Moktar, King of the Brachknaz, a man at once cowardly, insolent, and haughty, because he was sustained by the Chief of the Foulhas, carried away by force the favourite woman of Hilly-Koury, and so well succeeded in gaining her affections, that she



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declared to her former master her determination of separating from him for ever.

This insult was one of the greatest that could be offered to a Moor, who are a people extremely jealous. Hilly-Koury, and every individual in his tribe, denounced vengeance on this sanguinary offence, the resentment of which they stifled for more than a year, because they were too weak to struggle with so powerful an enemy; they nevertheless prepared for war, though with great slowness and timidity.

On this occasion, we ought not to have sided with Hamet-Moktar, who was no warrior, and thus dictate to the Siratick of the Foulhas. We ought rather to have upheld the weak, as was customary with the English on these occasions, but we abandoned Hilly-Koury to his unfortunate destiny. He obtained from the English some arms and ammunition; but these succours were not sufficient to resist the united efforts of the Brachknaz, the Darmanko, and the Foulhas.

The Trarshaz nevertheless resolved to make the attack; Hilly-Koury entered the field, and dared the cowardly Hamet-Moktar to a battle. The combat took place about twenty leagues from the island St. Louis, in the month of October 1786. The army of Hamet-Moktar, strengthened by four hundred Foulhas negroes was more powerful than that of Hilly-Koury; the Trarshaz nevertheless gave the first charge with boldness and courage; but they were at last compelled to yield to the superior number of their enemies, though not without leaving many in the field.

The vanquished Trarshaz took to flight, leaving

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Hilly-Koury with three faithful friends on the field of battle. He scorned to fly, notwithstanding the prayers and entreaties of his party to induce him to follow them. This noble-minded prince, when thus pressed, exclaimed to them, it was the duty of a king to die on the field of honour. He had been dismounted, and was wounded by several balls; when tearing off the cloth, which served him for a robe, he had it spread upon the ground, caused himself to be placed upon it, with his face towards the enemy, and in this situation, supported by the three brave warriors, who were determined to share his unfortunate fate, he awaited the arrival of Hamet-Moktar, who at the head of a body of cavalry was advancing to make him prisoner.

When they were within hearing of each other, Hilly-Koury, with a firm and articulate voice, vented the most unbounded reproaches on Hamet-Moktar. "You have," said he, "in my opinion, violated every law of Mahomet, and of humanity; you have not conquered me by superior courage, but by superior numbers; though thy Moors were more numerous than mine, yet you had the meanness to strengthen yourself by Foulhas negroes; coward that thou art! May my death bring every curse upon thy head, and may you perish with all that infamy which you merit."

These expressions rouzed the pride and anger of Hamet, who ordered a discharge of musketry to be fired on Hilly-Koury, and this unfortunate king perished with more than fifty wounds in the presence of his enemy, whom he defied with his last breath. His



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three faithful friends were also massacred; and such was the death of this brave Moor, whose conduct rendered him worthier of a nobler fate!

The army of the Trarshaz, though routed, escaped from the pursuit of Hamet-Moktar; a part of these run-aways passed within sight of fort St. Louis of the Senegal, swam across the river, and took refuge in the territory of Damel, King of Cayor, who was an ally of the unfortunate Hilly-Koury.

The consequences of this battle sufficiently proved, that it was wrong to suffer things to go to such a length; the Siratick Almami attributed the victory which Hamet-Moktar had gained over the Trarshaz to the four hundrd Foulhas who joined his army; and this success so swelled his pride, that he must needs give laws, not only to the Trarshaz, but also to the Brachknaz, to the Darmanko, to the negro kings, who were his neighbours, and even to the French of the Senegal.

In 1787, he insolently and haughtily announced some new and ridiculously exaggerated conditions for the liberty of the Galam convoy; which proceeding up the river during the increase of the waters, passed his possessions for more than a hundred leagues. We answered his demands with contempt, and in 1787, the voyage to Galam was suspended.

In order to favour the gum trade, to maintain a good understanding between the Moorish tribes who sold it to us, and to induce them to convey it to our factories in the Senegal, the government was in the habit of making annual presents, not only to the Moorish kings or chiefs, but also to other

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principal Moors, to the interpreters of the kings, and even to their women: as these presents were renewed every year, they were at length called duties.

It was the India Company who first instituted this custom of paying annual duties to the chiefs of the Moors, in the vicinity of the Senegal, and also to those princes and kings of negro nations, with whom, for the interests of commerce, it was necessary to have connections.

When the English, by a series of events resulting from the seven years war, became masters of the Senegal, they for the advantage of their commerce, continued the custom of making treaties of alliance with the negro and Moorish princes; and as in all their various administrations, every thing is established and concerted with order and regularity, the government of the Senegal, as well as that of fort James in the river Gambia, had a kind of manuscript register, which contained, in the most detailed manner, the motives, the number, and the order of the duties, which were to be paid annually to the chiefs of these African nations; the periods when they were to be delivered; some notes relative to the respective importance of these various chiefs; instructions to be observed in delivering these duties; and lastly, some political observations on the commerce of this part of Africa.

This register was sent by the English minister, to the Governor of the Senegal, with orders to conform to it exactly; at the same time, a similar one was sent to the governor of fort James, in the Gambia, because,



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this last-mentioned one, though in itself a distinct government, was nevertheless to arrange its operations after those of the Senegal; thus forming together one entire administration, under the name of the Government of Senegambia.

Chance has thrown into my hands one of these registers written in English; it is concluded by some interesting remarks, by a letter from the Secretary of the Commissioners of the Treasury, to the English commander of the Senegal; and by a contract dated 1767, between the Commissioners of the Treasury, and Mr. Samuel Smith, (a merchant in London) for supplying provisions for the troops of this government.

As I thought it would be of some utility to convey an idea to the reader of the presents which were annually made to these African princes and chiefs, I have extracted the information from the above-mentioned official register of the English. The following is a literal translation of the duties which they paid to the Moors during the time they possessed the Senegal, which was from 1760 to 1779.

*Annual duties paid to Hilly-Koury, King of the Trarshaz Moors, and to his interpreters.*

" The duties are not to be paid till the conclusion of the gum trading season, till after the merchants are on their return to the island St. Louis, and till the fleet from Galam has passed beyond the country of the Trarshaz. The country of the Trarshaz, extends from

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the bar of the river Senegal, along its eastern and northern banks, to the creek Endereer, a little above the village of Dagana.

*Duties paid to Hilly-Koury.*

" Thirty-three pieces of guinea.
Twenty-one muskets.
Six hundred musket flints.
Six hundred bullets.
Two ells of scarlet cloth.
Three pieces of Silesian linen.
Two ounces of cloves.
Twelve pounds of loaf-sugar.
Fifteen ankers of powder.

" When Hilly-Koury receives his duty, he is to present the governor with seven fine oxen.

*Duties paid to Hamet-Brahim, first interpreter of the King.*

" Two muskets.
One piece of guinea.
One anker of powder.

*For the six other interpreters of the King.*

" Six muskets.
Six pieces of guinea.
Six ankers of powder.

*Duties paid to Sydy-Moktar, one of the chief princes of the Tarshaz Moors.*

" Twenty-five pieces of guinea.
Ten ankers of powder.

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Eleven muskets.
Five hundred bullets.
Two pieces of Silesian linen.
One ell of scarlet cloth.
Six pounds of loaf-sugar.
One ounce of cloves.

*To the servant of Sydy-Moktar.*

" One piece of guinea.
One musket.
One anker of powder.

" When Sydy-Moktar, prince, and one of the chiefs of the Trarshaz, receives his duties, he will make to the governor a present of five oxen.

*Duties paid to Babukar-Syrhé, another chief the Trarshaz Moors.*

" Twenty-five pieces of guinea.
Ten ankers of powder.
Eleven muskets.
Five hundred musket flints.
Five hundred bullets.
Two pieces of Silesian linen.
One ell of scarlet cloth.
Six pounds of loaf sugar.
One ounce of cloves.

*To the servant of Babukar-Syrhé.*

" One piece of guinea.
One musket.
One anker of powder.

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*Duties paid to Hamet-Moktar, chief of the two Moorish tribes of the family of Agrichy.*

" Am-Hamet-Moktar is chief of the Moorish tribes Ouled-Abdallah, commonly called Brachknaz and Darmanko, and which forms the family of the Agrichy. The gum trade had engaged to pay annual duties to this Moorish king. These duties were augmented when we requested permission to erect a fort at Podhor, with a contiguous village, the inhabitants of which should be allowed to possess as much lands as they might think necessary to cultivate in the neighbourhood of the fort.

" These duties were regularly paid till 1765, when the French abandoned the fort and village. But in consequence of an agreement made with Am-Hamet-Moktar, the fort, as well as the village, was re-established in 1772, with the same privileges as before.

" At the period when this re-establishment took place, it was agreed that the duties hitherto paid by the French to the chief of the Brachknaz Moors should also be continued; but at the same time Hamet-Moktar shouldnot be authorized to claim them, until the beginning of August, 1775, at which time, and not until then, the re-construction of the fort and village of Podhor would be completed.

" The object of the re-establishment of Podhor, is not merely to maintain a good understanding and commerce with the Moors of Brachknaz and Darmanko, but also to acquire a sufficient authority over the

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Foulhas Peuls, who are the native inhabitants of this country, to prevent the hostility and plunder which they every day commit on the commerce of the whites, and other merchants of the isle St. Louis; and above all, to prevent them acting thus during the voyage to and from Galam, when the robberies and hostilities of these negroes often threaten the total destruction of the trade in these parts.

"It may be objected, that the distance from Podhor to Galam, it being nearly a hundred and thirty leagues, is too great to admit of the fort of Podhor exerting such an influence. But as the nation of Foulhas negroes, or Peuls, people the whole extent of country, which is situated on the western banks of the Senegal, between Podhor and Galam, and which in this part of Africa is designated under the name of the country of Fouta; besides many considerable establishments, which this nation has formed on the northern banks of the river, the whole of which is in the dominion of Shaltigée, king of the Foulhas, it may be replied, that in consequence of some arrangements made with this king, he would reimburse all hostile proceedings and consequent injuries committed by the Foulhas, his subjects, either against the white merchants, or other inhabitants of isle St. Louis, or the factories spread along the banks of the river; and that as these indemnities would extend to the whole of his subjects, the fort of Podhor will hence in reality possess a very important influence.

"The truth of this position was shortly after verified by a striking circumstance. Shaltigée, king of the

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Foulhas, having consented to pay the full value of a cargo of eighty-seven captives which ran aground, when returning from Galam, and was pillaged by the Foulhas negroes, at the distance of sixty leagues from Podhor.

" This circumstance sufficiently proves the utility and importance of this fort; the advantage of keeping up its establishment; and likewise of the duties paid to Hamet Moktar, for the protection which he engages to afford it against the Foulhas.

*Annual duties which will be paid to King Hamet-Moktar, chief of the family of Agrichy, as long as the establishment and fort of Podhor shall subsist.*

" Fifty-four pieces of guinea.
Eight pieces of Silesian linen.
Fifteen ankers of powder.
Six muskets.
Two hundred musket flints.
Two hundred bullets.
Eleven long bars of iron.
Twelve strings of glass beads.
Thirty piastres.
One pound of cloves, and
A wooden box, with a padlock.

" Military honors shall also be paid to the kings and chiefs of Trarshaz, and Brachnaz Moors, when they visit the isle St. Louis of the Senegal.

" When Hilly-Koury king of the Trarshaz Moors lands on the island, he shall be saluted with seven guns

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from the battery of the Savannah, and he is to receive the same salute at his departure.

" Sydy-Moktar and Babukar-Syrhé two chiefs of the Trarshaz, will be saluted with three guns each, on their arrival and departure.

" Am-Hamet-Moktar-Agrichy, king of the Brachknaz and Darmanko Moors, will be saluted with five guns from the same battery on his arrival and departure.

" It is customary to entertain certain chiefs of the continent at the expence of the king, when they visit the island, it being however well understood, that they are there only, to transact some official business with the governor.

" For example: Hilly-Koury, Sydy-Moktar and Babukar-Syrhe, shall receive daily during their stay in the island the following provisions.

" *Hilly Koury shall receive each day*

A middling sized ox.
Six measures of corn, equal to forty-two bushels.
Two gallons of molasses.
Two gallons of red or white wine.
Five pounds of loaf sugar.
Eight loaves.

" *Sydy-Moktar shall receive each day*

Two gallons of wine.
Two gallons of molasses.
Three measures of corn, equal to twenty-one bushels.
Twelve pounds of fresh beef.
Three loaves.



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" Babukar-Syrhé shall receive each day the same provisions as Sydy-Moktar, and if the children of these three chiefs are sent to the island to receive these tributes for their fathers, to each of them will be given one half of the provisions allowed to their fathers."

It was thus that every thing was foreseen and arranged relative to these Moorish chiefs, with whom for the advantage of commerce, it is necessary to keep up a good understanding.

If I have entered largely into the details on the gum trade, and on the Moorish tribes who sell us this commodity, it is because I consider it worthy of being known and that more particularly in France, where they possess but very indistinct and vague ideas either on this branch of commerce, on the influence which it would enable us to assume in Africa, or on the opportunities which it holds forth to us for extending our relations in this part of the globe.

This branch of trade should be encouraged and protected by the government, and every idea of exclusive privileges should be abandoned. This error has however been committed, and its consequences might have been fatal to the commerce of the Senegal.

But at that time there was too much indifference with regard to this part of Africa, and too much facility in granting those indiscreet favours which flatter the interests of a few individuals, at the expence of general industry.

They did not suspect that these imprudent benefits, granted so easily to particular favorites, would become



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sources of jealousies, intrigues, and suspicions; that they would discourage mercantile speculators, excite the discontent of commercial cities, and rouse the murmurs of the people, who always expect from those who govern, the most impartial and strict probity.

After the peace which closed the American war, and during the years 1782, 1783, and 1784, the commerce of the Senegal began to receive a new animation beneath the benign influence of liberty; many houses at Bordeaux, Nantz, La Rochelle, and Havre, had formed prosperouse stablishments in the island St. Louis, which would have become important and numerous, and thus have rendered this island the mart of a very extensive and a very advantageous commerce.

Towards the end of the year 1784 an exclusive privilege to carry on the gum trade of the Senegal was granted by means of an intrigue, to a company at Paris.

Not a single merchant of our greatest maritime cities, not even of Lyons or Paris, was found included in this commercial company.

A want of knowledge as well as a deficiency of stock, which they would not circulate with spirit, both concurred to check the gum trade which was carried on with great timidity. Every possible inconvenience resulted from the paucity of experience which the directors of this company possessed, who followed no fixed plan; who unceasingly changed their resolutions, who knew not where to place their confidence, and who justly believed themselves defrauded and badly obeyed.

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Though the advantages resulting from the diploma of this company were immense; though they excited against them all the merchants who found themselves oppressed and restricted by a privileged company; though numberless petitions were presented against them; though they had done considerable injury to the establishments which the free merchants had formed in the island St. Louis, this company nevertheless conceived theproject of extending yet further their charter.

They destroyed the establishments which had been formed in the island St. Louis by the free merchants. At first their object was only the gum trade, but towards the conclusion of the year 1786, notwithstanding all the protestations and remarks of M. De Boufiers, then Governor of the Senegal, and who went to France solely for the purpose of obtaining the abolition of this despotic privilege, they rendered it universal, and conceded to the gum company, the whole trade of the Senegal of whatever nature it might be.

A number of merchants who had reposed too much confidence in the natural rights of general industry were compelled to abandon the establishments which they had formed at a great expence; general consternation, dismay, and very serious losses, were the consequences; and the complaints and observations excited by an usurpation so contrary to reason and the rights of commerce, met only with indifference and contempt.

But this company, though arrived almost at sovereign power soon crushed by its own improvident measures, the immense advantages of its charter.



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It proceeded from one inconsistency to another, and from pretension to pretension; in fact, it abused its privileges so grossly, and the hatred and the opposition which it excited, manifested itself to such a degree, that in 1790, not a single nation inhabiting the borders of the Senegal could be found to trade with it.

May such a singular and striking example of the abuse of privileges, rescue for ever the commerce of the Senegal from the chains which they even now endeavour to impose upon it; and may the government of France become convinced that this commerce cannot flourish, cannot prosper, cannot exert an influence over Africa, but through the medium of a just liberty, and with the protection and encouragement of the state!

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## CHAP. VII.

### OF ZAARA, OR THE GREAT DESART OF BARBARY, AND OF THE MOORS WHO INHABIT ITS SOUTHERN REGIONS.

*Some observations on Zaara, or the great desart of Barbary—Conjectures on the origin of the Moors of Zaara—They are at once shepherds and merchants—Their character is cowardly and perfidious—Observations on their colour, figure, form, and hair—Customs of the men and women—They always live encamped under tents of ox-hides, or of a material made with camels hair—Of their commerce, their industry, and arts—They rear valuable camels, and horses, as well as numerous flocks of sheep, goats, and very fine oxen—They sometimes cross the largest rivers with troops of three or four hundred oxen—They possess a degree of comprehension and address which renders them capable of performing any thing they chuse to undertake.*

In addition to what has already been said relative to the Moors who frequent our factories of the Senegal, I shall now present the reader with some further observations, which may tend to render them better known; but pre-



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vious to these remarks, it may not, perhaps, be altogether superfluous if I say something of the immense desart of Zaara, in which these Moorish tribes are found.

Frederick II. King of Prussia, during his last illness called in the assistance of Dr. Zimmerman, then physician to the Duke of York, at Hanover. Discoursing one day with him on some sandy countries of Prussia, he said "Zimmerman, men are so proud that they imagine every thing in the world was made for them, and yet I cannot conceive why God has created sands." But how much more embarrassing is it to discover the cause and end of this creation, when we reflect on Zaara, that vast and immense desart of Barbary, whose smallest dimensions are more than six hundred leagues in length, by a medial breadth of about three hundred leagues.

This immense plain extends even beyond the thirtieth degree of North latitude; it terminates at the foot of the southern branch of Mount Atlas, where it occupies some vallies; by the extremity of the desart of Soudah, which is one of its dependencies, it touches on the Gulph of Syrtis, belonging to the Mediterranean sea; by the desart of Bilmaah, which is another of its appendages, it spreads to the East as far 40° 30′ longitude of the island of Ferro, nearly under the meridian of Bournou*; to the South it extends nearly to the

* Or Bornou. This city is the capital of a considerable country of the same name situate to the South-east

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fifteenth degree of North latitude, and to the West its limits are the shores of the Atlantic ocean.

This vast desart is, as it were a sea of fine, white, and moving sand, and along the whole of this barren spot, there may, perhaps, sometimes with great difficulty be discovered some isolated places, where vegetation has been able to flourish; certain it is that these portions

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of Fezzan, and the West of Nubia; it is of very great extent, being from the sixteenth to the twentieth degree of North latitude. The climate is very sultry though with occasional variations of atmosphere; the year has only two seasons, the one commencing about the middle of April, the other about the middle of October, the first begins with violent tempests of wind, thunder, lightening, and a deluge of rain, continuing for several days without intermission, and during which time the inhabitants confine themselves totally within their houses; the remainder of the season, though hot and sometimes wet, is not, however, such as to impede the labours of agriculture. During the other part of the year, the heat is less intense, the air is pure and mild, and the weather serene. The inhabitants are numerous and consist of various nations, and it is affirmed that thirty different languages are spoken in the empire. They are uniformly black, but not of the negro cast. The dress of the greater part is composed of shirts made of blue cotton, manufactured in the country, a red cap brought from Tripoli, and a white muslin turban; gold rings are worn in the noses by the great people, as a

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which can hardly be compared to the oases of Thebaid, are so rare in Zaara, that if united they would not form the hundredth part of the surface of this desert, which

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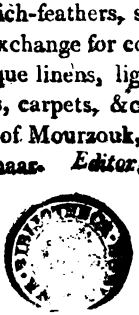
mark of distinction. Wheat and barley are seldom raised in Bornou, but the European horse-bean and common kidney bean are cultivated here with some grain peculiar to the country; near the city, rice and Indian corn are found. Among the fruits are grapes, apricots, lemons, limes, melons, &c; among the animals are sheep, cows, goats, horses, buffaloes, antelopes, lions, leopards, civet cats, wolves, dogs, elephants, &c. The reptiles of different kinds are numerous, especially serpents, snakes, scorpions, centipedes, and toads. Some of the inhabitants are Mahometans and others Pagans. On the death of the king, his successor is elected by the people. The king's palace in this place is surrounded by a wall-like citadel, and the whole city has a wall fourteen-feet in height, encompassed by a ditch; the other towns of the kingdom are open. The military force consists chiefly of horse, and is said to be greater than that of Morocco. The sabre, pike, lance, and bow, are the chief weapons; fire-arms are not used. The principal commerce consists in gold dust, horses, slaves, ostrich-feathers, salt and civet, which they sell or give in exchange for copper, brass, dollars, red woollen caps, cheque linens, light coarse woollen cloth, baize, barakans, carpets, &c. &c. It is six hundred miles South-east of Mourzouk, and four hundred and twenty West of Sennaar. *Editor.*



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has a superficies of more than a hundred and eighty thousand square leagues.

How many opportunities have been presented to us by our establishments of the Senegal, of traversing and observing these solitary and curious regions; but we have always neglected them, while the more inquisitive and enterprising English, have performed many journies through them, and it is to that nation we are indebted for all authentic information, relative to this desart, and concerning which I have endeavoured to unite all the various accounts both ancient and modern. As these accounts, dispersed over a vast number of works, could not be here brought forward, without having been maturely discussed, and subjected to a very severe and scrutinizing criticism, they would hence form a chapter too extensive for this work; I shall therefore confine myself at present, merely to a few summary notes and observations on a region which occupies so considerable ap art of the globe, and which offers an immense field for reflection to those who love to meditate on the sublime features of nature.

It appears hitherto, to have been sufficiently known, that in Zaara, there are thirty-two oases or habitable countries, which are rendered fertile by sources of fresh water. The greatest of these oases, are inhabited by different Moorish tribes, who have established themselves there, and have formed a sort of colonies, which are supposed to amount to about seventeen in number; the other less considerable oases are merely places of refreshment, and rest for the caravans who traverse this

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desart, as well as for the Moors who regularly perform these journies.

It is known that the caravans cross the great desart of Zaara in nine principal and different directions, and that the Moorish tribes established there traverse it in every point.

The Moors residing in the vallies, formed by the western branch of the Atlas, the Mussulmen, and several other savage tribes, together with the tribe of Thieves, the Trarshaz, the Brachknaz, and the Darmanko, very frequently perform journies between the Senegal and Morocco.

A caravan sets off every year from Mekinez, proceeds to Tatta, crosses the whole width of the desart, and arrives at Jarra, which is situated under the fifteenth northern parallel, about sixty leagues to the East of Galam. The route of this caravan is five hundred leagues. Merchants and others sometimes cross the desart, between Tatta and Thombouctou, which is near four hundred leagues.

It is certain that many journies have been performed between Thombouctou, Tripoli, and Cairo; a part of the caravan from Morocco proceeds along the banks of the Niger to Kassina, Ghana, and Kanga; sometimes it visits Sennaar, proceeds to Gerri on the right bank of the Nile, and finally reaches Suakim, situated on the borders of the Red Sea, having performed a route of near thirteen hundred leagues. Hence this immense desart is constantly travelled over in many different directions; and it may create some astonishment, that

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France has to the present moment remained indifferent to travels, which by her might be so easily performed.

It has already been observed, that Zaara offers a vast field for reflection and profound meditation. Can we, indeed, do otherwise than ruminate on this ocean of sand, and on the cause of such an immense extent of burning and solitary regions, where man could never have penetrated, had not God given him the camel?

I have often asked myself, from whence could proceed such an astonishing acervation of fusible or vitrifiable earth; for pulverized and petrescent sand are one and the same, and are classed in this species of earth.

The soil of this desart is nothing more than a mass of small uncombined particles, which are not like the elements of sand petrified, though capable of becoming so. The sands of Zaara are composed of *infinitely small* grains,* and have a very great depth; the winds agitate them like the waves of the sea; they form themselves into mountains; are again dispersed by the

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* This is an incorrect expression in philosophy, and even absurd if tried by the common criterion of reason. *Infinitely small*, implies nothing; for one part of matter must undoubtedly bear proportion to another part, that may be supposed, and cannot be infinitely small, compared to it. Matter cannot be divided into parts so small but that it is still capable of being divided. In fact, this expression, used by the atomists, has long since been exploded from legitimate philosophy.—*Editor.*

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winds, and expand themselves into clouds of such an immense elevation, that the rays of the sun are obscured. Along this vast extent may sometimes be observed salient streams of sand, resembling the water-spouts, which are seen in the ocean: in fact, these regions are by nature of the most discordant texture, for in the whole of this desart space seldom do we meet with rocks, and fertile countries are uncommonly rare.

In the arid, dusty, and sandy plains, bordering on the North of the Senegal, I have seen these spouts of sand arise, forming columns, which sometimes rush along with rapidity, and at others advance with majestic regularity, presenting a spectacle at once grand and magnificent; sometimes their motion is so quick, that they are barely perceived, before they appear like ribbons floating in the air, at the pleasure of the wind, with their inferior extremity always touching the earth: at others they elevate themselves to such a prodigious height, that they appear lost among the clouds; they often break at this distance, and this immense volume of sand is then dispersed through the atmosphere; at other times it separates in the middle, and produces a detonation similar to the explosion of a mine. One day I counted three of these spouts, at the distance of a mile from each other; the diameter of the greatest was about two feet, and their rapidity was truly astonishing.

We sometimes meet in these solitudes, not far from the right bank of the Senegal, some very considerable rocks of a black colour, containing a portion of pure iron, which is isolated and scattered about. In what manner



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it may be asked, did these masses, containing pure and native iron, obtain (thus isolated) in countries where iron mines are unknown? Were they conveyed thither by the sea?

"Or rather may they not be classed with those foreign bodies, which, according to the celebrated professor Chladni, sometimes fall from the heavens, as has happened in the county of York, at Sienna, in America, and at Benares, in India? These astonishing phenomena are well accredited at London, where there are many collections of the fragments of these stones. M. A. Pictet, one of the compilers of the Bibliotheque Britannique, speaks of them in a letter written from Edinburgh to one of his colleagues, and dated the 18th of July, 1801".

This is an object of research and curiosity, worthy the attention of naturalists.

These sands of Zaara are at present steril; their dryness, minuteness, and mobility, will not admit of any vegetation; but if it be true, as many authors have affirmed, that the pure sands that are in such abundant masses in this desart, are only the sediments of the earth, which is exhausted, we may then imagine a period, far more remote than any which history or even tradition has transmitted to us, when this vast desart now so steril, so arid, and so solitary, was fertile, blooming, and picturesque, and nourished an innumerable population.

Linnæus, when speaking of the earth of Bruyere, which is entirely arenacious, denominates it *humus depoperata*. This is the last state of productive earth,



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and precedes that of exhaustion, when it is no longer capable of producing any vegetation, and such is in general the earth of Zaara.

Let us for a moment reflect, how many physical revolutions and transmutations the surface of our globe has undergone, and the causes of which are yet unknown to us; that countries, which were formerly fertile and populous, have now become steril and deserted; that the magnificent ruins of Palmyra, yet exist in a sandy level plain, without trees, without water, and circumscribed to the right and left by a chain of barren mountains. Can it be supposed that such was the foundation of that celebrated city, whose very name indicates that it existed in the country of palm trees? Is it probable that a city so populous, and beautiful, which was famous even in the days of Solomon, which was formerly the mart for all the commerce that existed between Europe and India, and which became so powerful and affluent beneath the dominion of Odenat and Zenobia, should have existed amidst uncultivated and barren sands? doubtless not: Palmyra once saw her plains and hills covered with verdant vegetation and shady groves; and if at present its ruins be found, amidst a sea of arid sands, it only proves that the earth may become exhausted, and that it may cease to bring forth the fruits of nature; and this example alone, independent of others which might be cited, authorises us to conclude, that Zaara has not always existed in the state in which it is at present found.

All the southern parts of Zaara, in the vicinity of the Senegal, and from the mouth of that river to a considerable distance beyond the cataract of Felow, are

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either frequented or inhabited by a race of men usually designated under the name of Moors.

Colonies of these savages are scattered in the oases over the desart; others have founded kingdoms to the North of the Senegal and the Niger, and they are even to be found near Bournou, under the 40° 30′ East longitude of the island of Ferro. These wandering and expatriated Moors therefore occupy, at the extremities of Zaara, and nearly between the sixteenth and twenty-sixth degree of North latitude, an extent from East to West of eight hundred and seventy-five leagues.

The natural desire of man, to elucidate what is obscure, induces us to enquire whence came these barbarians, which we at present class under the generic denomination of Moors, who reign over this great desart of Barbary, and who have established colonies and even kingdoms on the northern banks of the Senegal and Niger. I have myself entered into these researches, which are enveloped in obscurity; they present, however, much interest, but require a discussion too elaborate for this work. I shall therefore, at present, confine myself merely to some of the principal points.

The existence of the Atlantic people, the submersion of the ancient Atalantis, * the influx of the ocean into the bason which covers the Mediterranean sea, and

* It is also called Atlantis and Atlantica: it is an island mentioned by Plato and others of the ancients, and concerning the real existence of which many dis-



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which separates Spain from Africa, are all circumstances and events which must be referred to the primitive

putes have taken place. Homer, Horace, and the other poets, make two Atlanticas, calling them *Hesperides* and *Elysian Fields*, making them the habitations of the blessed. Many authors of high authority are inclined to consider it as a fiction, and peremptorily reject all idea of a submersion; while others endeavour, by the barren aid of reason, unsupported by any well authenticated facts, to support its existence. On either side, ingenious speculation and fanciful supposition may be brought forward, but to neither of them can sober reflection unconditionally bow; and in cases of this nature it is always prudent, nay perhaps indispensable, to keep in mind the solid and admirable maxim of Voltaire: "*Incredulity is the source of wisdom:*" and when in our closets, we are pondering on the actions of antiquity, and on the bold assertions of unqualified belief, another lively expression of the same author may often be of service to us, "*n'en croyés point.*"

The most distinct account of this imaginary island may be found in Plato's Timœus, and of which Mr. Chambers gives the following abstract:

"The Atlantis was a large island in the western ocean, situated before or opposite to the Straits of Gades. Out of this island there was an easy passage into some others, which lay near a large continent exceeding in bigness all Europe and Asia. Neptune settled in this island (from whose son Atlas its name

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æras of the earth. These have been transmitted to us by tradition; and though we are ignorant of the period

was derived), and divided it among his ten sons. To the youngest fell the extremity of the island, called Gadir, which in the language of the country signifies fertile, or abundant in sheep. The descendants of Neptune reigned here from father to son for a great number of generations, in the order of primogeniture, during the space of 9000 years. They also possessed several other islands; and, passing into Europe and Africa, subdued all Libya, as far as Egypt and all Europe, to Asia Minor. At length the island sunk under water; and for a long time afterwards the sea thereabouts was full of rocks and shelves."

Some of the moderns are of opinion, that the existence of the Atalantis is not to be regarded as entirely fabulous. Some imagine it to have been America, and from thence, as well as from a passage in Seneca's Medea, they suppose the new world was not unknown to the ancients. But admitting this to be the case, the above-mentioned continent, which is said to lie beyond Atalantis, would rather seem to have been the continent of America than Atalantis itself. Rudbeck, professor in the university of Upsal, in a work entitled *Atlantica sive Manheim*, endeavours to prove, that Sweden and Norway are the Atalantis of the ancients; but this is by no means probable. Kircher, as well as our author, supposes it to have been an island extend-



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at which they happened, yet there is no doubt but the great desart of Barbary, has participated in them and perhaps some of the unfortunate remains of the Atlantes of Africa, then took refuge among the most elevated parts of the Atlas contigious to Zaara, and progressively established themselves in the oases of this desart.

We are informed by Sallust, that an Hercules died in Spain; that his army which was composed of various nations then dispersed; that the Persians, Medes, and Armenians passed into Africa, and intermingled with the Getulæ, and formed a new nation under the name of Numidians; hence the vast solitudes of this desart may have received also some of these barbarous hordes.

It is known that at an epoch less remote the than one we are speaking of, namely, 1926, before the christian æra, Amenophis who reigned in the dynastry of Thebes, ex-

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ing from the Canaries to the Azores; that it was really submerged as Plato asserts; and that these small islands are only the shattered remains which were left standing.

Every reader is acquainted with the elegant and classical fiction which Lord Bacon has built upon this foundation. His philosophical commonwealth in imitation of the Utopia, of Sir Thomas More, requires no eulogy from my pen. Its chief design is to exhibit a model or description of a college instituted for the interpretation of nature and the production of great and marvellous works for the benefit of men, under the name of *Solomon's House*, or the *college of the six days work*.—*Editor*.

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pelled from Egypt the Berberæ, who had usurped the three dynasties of Tanis, Memphis, and This, where they had exercised their tyranny near three hundred years; these savages spread towards the West of Africa, and according to Leo the African, they established a new kingdom to the South of Mount Atlas, under the thirtieth degree of North latitude, and between the tenth and twentieth longitudinal degree East of the island of Ferro, and it is from them that this part of Africa received the name of Barbary; some families therefore, of these vile shepherds, may also have established themselves in the oases of the desart.

From the moment of the influx of the Berberæ, in Barbary, and during a space of five-and-thirty centuries, these northern regions of Africa, have been unceasingly the theatre of the most sanguinary wars and of every vicissitude which this world can undergo.

The Grecian colonies were succeeded by some from Phœnecia; these sunk beneath the arms of the Roman legions, who in their turn were destroyed by the Arabs; this people under the name of Saracens and Moors invaded Spain, threatened all Europe, and were repeatedly driven back into Africa. The savage contests of lions and tigers, are not more cruel than the wars which have been successively raised between these various nations.

It was not till after having shed torrents of blood, that in 1051, Abu-Tessifin, of the tribe of Marabethous or Marabouths, founded the empire of Morocco, which extended to Thombouctou on the banks of the Niger.

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The Turks in their turn deluged with blood these unhappy countries; and in such a long series of ages, during which men seemed to exist in Africa only to destroy each other; and lastly, by the banishment, in a single day, of nine hundred thousand Moors, whom Phillip the Third compelled to evacuate in 1610, the territory of Spain, being the refuse of fifty different nations, all ferocious and cruel, have, perhaps, at various periods spread themselves over the immense desart of Zaara.

Hence it is not astonishing that these Moors, scattered as they are, in hordes, tribes, colonies, and even in kingdoms along this vast space, and on the northern banks of the Niger and Senegal, should offer to those who observe them with attention, a strange and discordant mixture of various races in every respect dissimilar.

Among them may be perceived men of a grave physiognomy, with penetrating looks, elevated forehead, aquiline nose, venerable beard, well articulated muscles, a sallow skin, a serious deportment, a tranquil countenance, and in short every constituent of an Arabian philosopher.

Others by their superior stature, vigor, and agility, by their firm and noble countenance, by their less prominent features, by their ardent yet languishing eyes, by their bold yet tender look, and by their yellow though florid complexion, recall to imagination those Saracen heroes, whose gallantry rendered them so beloved in Spain, and whom the pen of history and fiction, have rendered so celebrated.

Here also may be found men of athletic stature, whose proportions are just and prominent, whose features are

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regularly traced, and whose colour, though brown, glows with the tint of the finest carnation; such are the Turks of Constantinople.

But the greater part present only savage and ferocious countenances, and in their habitual commerce with the Iolofs, and Foulhas with whom the Moors of Zaara often mix, many of them acquire distinctive characters; these are large, well-made, and lithe, with the exception of their legs which are rather lank and bandy; their forehead is more angular, their nose more round, their lips thicker, their eyes more soft and their colour red, strongly impregnated with black.

It is very remarkable that one of the predominant characterestics of the Moors of the southern countries of the desart, is also strongly similar with what is generally observed in the phisiognomy and conformation of the Jews; many of these savages have meagre bodies, lank legs and thighs, the spine slightly curvated, the visage long and hollow, the eyes sunk but animated and lively, the nose small and pointed, the gait quick and active, and the language brief, prompt, and lively.

These Moors are also like the Jews addicted to gesticulation, but it must be confessed that their countenances is more noble, and their look more firm and ingenuous, and though their character is well known; though it is acknowledged that they are crafty, perfidious, and cruel; that they are dangerous from the facility with which they become traitors, and even ferocious whenever their interest prompts them; and that they are unworthy of any kind of confidence; I have nevertheless found the natural deportment of the greater part of

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those whom I have seen, so consonant to the ideas I had formed of free and independent men, that it was with difficulty I could withhold myself from reposing that confidence in them, which their appearance had inspired.

These Moors are both shepherds and merchants; they are shepherds, because in those abodes, which they have formed in the midst of the desart, they rear numerous flocks of goats, sheep, oxen, camels, and horses, with which they travel into the interior regions of Africa, and there sell them; but they possess none of those virtues, none of those mild and interesting qualities, which are usually considered as the natural appendages of a pastoral life.

They are also merchants; they perform very extensive journies through the desart, which they traverse in every direction; they pillage slaves on the banks of the Senegal and Niger, which they carry for sale as far as the shores of the Mediterranean sea; they go even to Galam, and into the country of Bambouk, with salt which they exchange for gold; they frequent Thombouctou, Tocrrur, Morocco, Algiers, and Tripoli, and even the Red Sea; many of them, once in their lives, perform pilgrimages to Mecca and Medina; Sydy Moktar, Prince of the Trarshaz, as already mentioned, and who was often at the island St. Louis, had performed this pilgrimage twice; he was *Hadji*, that is to say, a pilgrim, and this distinction added greatly to the importance which he possessed, from his green turban which he wore, as one of the relations of Mahomet;

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from his rank as a prince, his handsome figure, his powerful understanding, and his engaging manners.

The Moors also conduct their oxen and their horses, as far as the sources of the Zaara, in the interior of Africa, to the South of the equinoctial line, and more than a thousand geographical leagues from their oases; it is principally in bartering, trafficking, and in the avocations of merchants, that these Moors take delight and they have all the vices and defects of thieves, rogues, swindlers, and cheats.

The Moors who sell the gum to us, and who consequently maintain with us a regular and frequent intercourse, are in general cowardly and perfidious; it is almost always by surprise, by treason, or by a superiority of numbers, that they obtain their advantages, and when this is effected, they give loose to every excess of cruelty, and prove themselves destitute of every sentiment of generosity, compassion, or pity.

Hilly-Koury whose death I have related, Sydy Moktar, and some other Moors of the tribe of Trarshas, were the only people of these savages, who either merited, or possessed our confidence and esteem; the mass of these barbarians possess every vice, are capable of every crime, and are deficient in every virtue.

The general colour of their skin, is that of copper, intermingled with red and black; the complexion of the women is more clear and uniform than that of the men, often bordering on a pale yellow, but still a little mixt with black.

In their youth they are well made with an elegant and graceful appearance; their breasts are not so large as

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those of the negresses, but of a more pleasing form; the contour of their hips and reins are also more delicate, slender, and finely formed.

Far different from the Moors whose countenances are in general ferocious, the features of the young female moors combine all the charms of regularity, mildness and elegance, and I believe it is with them as with all the women in the universe, whoare naturally good and interesting from a marked inclination towards benevolence, and become corrupted only from the influence of the vicious manners, of the society in which they live; the mooresses, are doubtless, women who were born to please and be beloved, were it not that in their infancy their souls are corrupted by the vices and depravity of the men with whom they are connected.

At the age of twenty, their attractions, graces, and blooming countenances are faded; the savage and lascivious Moors, know no command over their desires; abandoned to all the brutality of their passions, they do not allow time for the girls to attain their full growth, and these gross barbarians, ignorant equally of genuine love and voluptuousness, permit not the beauty of their women to attain its full perfection, but corrupt and contaminate their innocence, and crush the flowers of modesty in their very opening. Thus it happens in general with all the women who form the retinue of the Moors in their journies, and those who have passed the age of forty, are not only hideous in their appearance, but their character is as infamous as their ugliness is disgusting.



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I have however been assured, that in the oases in the interior of Zaara there are some families whose manners are pure, whose wives and daughters never quit the vallies in which they were born, and who, breathing an healthy atmosphere, and being accustomed to innocent and mild pursuits, they preserve their beauty and attraction much longer than those who follow the Moors who encamp themselves for a number of months every year, near our factories.

The hair of the men has something in it very elegant, and it imparts a singular character to the appearance of their heads; this hair which is of the same nature as the long and thick hair, never descends lower than the nape of the neck; it is naturally abundant and curly, so that the head of a Moor is superbly ornamented with a covering which weaves itself into a variety of natural ringlets, the beauty and fine irregularity of which art can never imitate; they are of a deep chesnut-colour, nearly approaching to black.

Such of the women as are restricted by custom and habit, wear their hair in tresses, closely plaited, and either pendant or fastened to the top of their head; they are very long, and their colour is even blacker than those of the men; they adorn their hair with ornaments of different kinds, such as light rings of gold, of silver, of copper, or of ivory, with feathers of a variety of colours, or with pieces of coral, and they range these ornaments with much taste and elegance.

The customs of the men are various: the greater part of them wear a large shirt of blue callico, which covers the upper part of the body, and the loins, but descends



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no farther than the middle of the thighs; this shirt is open down to the stomach, and leaves the breast and neck uncovered; the sleeves are very large and open towards the wrist; the greater part wear no other cloathes, and such is the habilliment of the lower classes who are always the most numerous.

Some of them are covered with a kind of hooded cloak, which incloses the head; the form of this cloak is square; its two upper ends are fastened across the breast by means of a clasp, and it hangs down to their heels; it is made of the well-prepared skins of their still-born lambs, with the hair outside. These skins are very industriously and neatly joined together.

The kings, princes, chiefs, and rich people, wear pieces of callico, either white or blue, and sometimes streaked with a variety of colours, The kings are sometimes cloathed in large pieces of a light fine stuff, made from wool, goats' hair, or the hair of camels; these *envelopes* form a very large robe, with a noble and graceful appearance, and are always so put on, as to leave the body free and unconfined; they are generally streaked with large blue or purple stripes on a white ground. This robe is fastened on the right shoulder, and leaves the arm entirely at liberty.

These princes and chiefs, acquire a very grand, striking, and noble appearance, from their mode of dressing; they wear red or green sashes, the ends of which hang freely behind, collars of golden grains intermingled with amber and coral, plates of gold suspended on the bosom, various rings of the same metal which encircle their wrists and arms, and rings of gold

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in their ears, from whence are suspended large gold drops.

The dress of the women is composed of two pieces of cloth, most generally blue, but sometimes stained with other colours; one of them covers the shoulders down to the knees, the other descends from the loins down to the heels; they wear on their feet, sandals or slippers of morrocco, the colour of which is always red or yellow: their ears, neck, wrists, and arms, are ornamented with rings of gold, and round their loins, immediately upon the skin, they wear large bands of eight or ten rows of coral, of glass beads, and sometimes of cloves.

It cannot be expected that men completely depraved, equally cowardly and cruel, who possess no social principle, who know no right either natural or political, and who follow no other impulse than what their self-interest and their passions dictate, should have among them the least shadow of morality or those cultivated manners which result from civilized society; but if this last term must be used, in speaking of the habits and manner of living among the Moors, why then we may say that their *manners* are barbarous, corrupted, and disgusting.

Sydy Moktar wished to persuade me, that in the oases of the interior of the desart, there were some families whose mode of living was even patriachial, and whose manners were pure and simple; but he confessed that these examples were very rare.

If we may judge of the Moors which are spread over the desart, by those with whom we confer on the



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banks of the Senegal, and the shores of the Atlantic ocean, we shall be compelled to assert, that the great body of these savages form a people the most abject and the most infamous of any known nation in the world.

As these savages of Zaara, are possessed of a considerable share of intellect and discrimination, and some of them have given unequivocal proofs of a most sublime courage, we may reasonably believe that to effect their civilization would be feasible; but it would in fact require well concerted and skilful measures, and even then must be the result of considerable time. This attempt, however, which would be worthy of an age, in which knowledge and science have so conspicuously shone forth, and which our situation in the Senegal, presents many opportunities of performing, might be attended with the most important consequences to our commerce and industry.

There is not on the face of the earth, a race of men, more free and independent than the Moors, who inhabit the southern parts of the great desart of Barbary. Divided as they are into tribes, each tribe has one or more chief, who almost always descends from a very ancient family, the stamina of which is well known.

The authority of these chiefs is maintained rather by interest and address than by right; and this is more particularly the case, as all the indigent Moors put themselves voluntarily under the protection of the kings and princes, who hence acquire authority and power; but notwithstanding their rank and the riches they may possess, they are compelled to observe a very circumspect and politic conduct; without making incessant

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sacrifices, and even dividing a part of the presents which they receive, they would be unable to retain their authority over these independent and ferocious men, who from their faithless and determined character, are always ready to revolt and promote insubordination.

A king, a prince, or a chief, can neither undertake nor conclude any thing, without being authorised by the other great men, and even by the mass of the people; if he stipulate any treaty for them, he is compelled to make known to the nation at large, all the circumstances of the negociation.

These perfidious men are full of deceit, and always believe themselves deceived. The only thing which they never dispute with their kings and princes, is, the right which they possess, when war is declared, of marching at the head of their tribe, and of commanding in person in the day of battle.

Neither in camps, their oases, nor in their places of general residence, have the kings and chiefs any personal distinction; equally dirty and miserably cloathed with the poorest of their tribe, there is nothing to indicate their superior rank; but on any extraordinary occasion, as when they treat with the Europeans on any object of general interest, they are then escorted by princes, nobles, and warriors, and accompanied by a vast number of pretended secretaries and interpreters; they affect an air of authority, and even despotism, over their subjects, and never speak to them but in a tone of superiority and disdain.

But all this fictitious splendor and superiority is maintained only to render the chief important in the



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eyes of the whites, for no sooner does he return into the midst of his tribe, than he assumes his usual deportment, and is compelled to endure without irritation or murmuring, all the insolent and importunate familiarities of those who a moment before had permitted him to treat them as slaves. In their camps and oases, the vilest of the savages will impudently set himself down by the side of the king, and there arrogate to himself the right of taking the pipe from his mouth, and smoaking it, or thrusting his hand into the plate out of which he is eating; in fact on every occasion they treat him as their equal.

In the oases as well as on the banks of the river, these Moors live in tents which are made either of tanned ox hides, or of woven camels hair, which forms a thick covering and entirely water proof. The women prepare, card, and spin the camel's hair, and manufacture this stuff on looms of singular simplicity.

The tents are generally oval or round; those of the kings, princes, and chiefs, are sometimes square; they are supported by stakes, divided into partitions, and one side of the tent according to the aspect of the sun, always remains open. There, huddled together, lives the father, the mother, children of all ages, together with horses, goats, and sheep; but harmony is so completely established between the human and animal branches of this assembly, that the horses which are considered as individuals of the family, pass and repass amidst the youngest of the children, and caress them without offering them the least injury.

I am unceasingly obliged to limit the number of details which I could bring forward on the various subjects

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treated upon, and I cannot even here lay before the reader, all which I know of the private manners of these savages *; a few more particular traits must, however, be yet given.

In their oases they have a number of palm-date-trees. They know that this tree which attains to a very considerable elevation thrives in a sandy soil, and that it is *uniserual*, that is, the flowers and fruits grow on different branches; the fruit which is suspended from the top of the tree, forms a kind of cluster which they call diet; a date-tree in its full age, bears a dozen of these clusters, each of which produces a hundred dates.

This fruit when just matured is a very wholesome aliment; the Moors of Zaara assure us that there is nothing so nourishing and capable of making them adipose as fresh dates. In the oases the women belonging to the princes and rich people, nourish themselves entirely with dates, and habitually use a luscious juice, which they express from this fruit, by squeezing it be-

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* This is certainly a very inadequate excuse, or rather no excuse at all for withholding interesting details on subjects of acknowledged importance and curiosity. When an author sits down to write a book, he is not circumscribed by any absolute necessity; and it may be considered as a breach of literary faith, particularly in books of travels, when he declines to communicate all the information which he possesses to his readers.—*Editor.*

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tween two flat boards. After having observed this regimen for some months, they become enormously lusty, which, in the opinion of the Moors, is the acmé of female beauty.

The fatter a woman is, the more certain she is of pleasing; and she who has fifty pounds of additional flesh is sure to obtain the preference. The princes in particular are passionately fond of prodigiously fat women; the one which Hamét Moktar ravished from Hilly-Koury, and which in 1786 occasioned the war between the Trarshaz and Brachknaz, was of a most enormous size, and in Europe would have been considered literally as a monster.

The ordinary nutriment of these men consists of oxen, goats, some milch cows, the milk of mares and camels, millet either dry or made into *kouskou*, maize, dates, and gum; their sobriety would be really inconceivable were it not their camels present instances of abstinence still more incomprehensible.

This animal is certainly the most valuable and precious of any which the Creator has formed for man; his size, the burthens which he bears, and the fatigues and journies which he undergoes, would seem to require a proportionable quantity of nourishment: on the contrary, he lives on a few dry herbs and parched leaves which he may meet with scattered about during his journey; he sustains, during many days, the most complete abstinence from eating and drinking, and this he always bears uncomplaining, and apparently untormented by any want. These, and many other astonish-

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ing circumstances, which are to be found combined in this singular animal, have induced me to allot one whole chapter to its description.

The camps, which are annually established by the Moors on the banks of the river, are composed of all the best men in the tribe; those who sell us the gum are almost always either advanced in years, or in the very flower of youth; for in general we only see men under the age of sixty or above that of fourteen.

Their religion is that of Islamism, and they are very zealous Mahometans; but as superstition is ever the attendant of a foul conscience, and systematic depravity, they are in consequence most ridiculously superstitious. Their priests, whom they call Marabouhts, and who form a very important tribe among them, support this deplorable weakness, which when carried to the utmost excess, proves that the light of reason will become extinct, unless fed by morality, virtue, and uncontaminated religion.

These men, who are in their very nature vicious, corrupt, inhuman, cruel, and ferocious, cover themselves with *grisgris* which are a kind of amulet or talisman, manufactured by their priests and sold to them at a very dear price. They make use of them upon every occasion, and upon every circumstance; they are either certain sacred words from the koran, written on pieces of paper, or hairs from the tail of an elephant or hippopottamus, the claws of a lion, panther, or tiger, certain grains or plates of gold, or any other metal, on which are engraved inscriptions and signs.

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There is great variety in these *grisgris* or amulets, which are inclosed in little morocco cases, very neatly made; some are for the head, others for the eyes, and in fact, they have them for every part of the body, for every disease, for every danger; and as a preservative against all kinds of witchcraft; they hang them in every part of their tents; load them on their oxen, their horses, and their camels; and ornament their persons with them in profusion.

The commerce of these Moors has for its object every thing which can be bartered, and which offers to them any probability of interest. They possess the gum; they have salt mines; they rear a great number of oxen, camels, and goats; and convey these principal objects of their commerce to a considerable distance for sale.

Besides these, they have goldsmiths, who work in gold, silver, and iron; who manufacture all the rings, ear-rings, ornaments, little bells, chains, and bracelets, with which their princes, chiefs, women, and negreeses on the banks of the Senegal, and the Gambia, ornament themselves. I have even seen the Moors of Zaara sell these ornaments in the river of Sierra Leona, and have been assured that they carry them as far as Congo. *

* This is sometimes called Kongo, and is bounded on the North by the kingdoms of Loango and Aniko, on the East by Metambo, and on the South by Angola. The climate is hot in summer; the winters are mild as

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The common style of these trinkets is that of filligree or arabesque*: these are a kind of designs which

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the finest springs of Italy. Snow never falls unless upon the highest mountains; ice is unknown; their days and nights are almost always equal. In the winter, the rain sometimes falls very heavy, so as to inundate the country. The soil is good, and generally produces two crops in a year. The men are averse from labour, which they commit to their slaves, or, from want of such, to their wives, who cultivate the ground, sow, dig, and reap. The principal corn used by them is maize; they likewise cultivate pease and beans of different kinds. Of fruit trees they have scarcely any but what were introduced by the Portuguese. Among the trees are the alicondi, of such a monstrous bulk, that ten men cannot fathom it. The bark of this tree macerated, yields a kind of thread, of which they make ropes: the shell or rind of the fruit, which is like a gourd, being cleared of its pulp, serves for vessels for various uses: the insanda tree, the bark of which being beaten and macerated, makes a thread finer than the aliconda: the mangloss, a tree whose branches bend downwards, and taking root, form new trees, so that one single tree may make a whole forest. There are several kinds of palms, the most common of which is that whose fruit contains a great

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* *For this* (*) *see page* 235.

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they form of very small grains of gold, and arranged with much art and delicacy.

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many kernels, of an exquisite taste when full ripe, which, when pressed, produces oil, used instead of butter. They draw from these trees by incision a vinous liquor, which turns sour in five or six days. Vines brought here from Candia, where they have been well cultivated, yield excellent grapes twice a year. Among the aromatic plants are the dondo; a shrub which serves for cinnamon; and the inquaffo, a kind of creeping vine, which bears seeds like pepper. Lilies, tulips, tube-roses, hyacinths, &c. are exquisitely beautiful, and grow naturally in the fields, vallies, and woods. The grass in the low lands grows so high, thick, and rank, that it becomes a dangerous receptacle to wild beasts and reptiles. Among the animals are elephants of a monstrous size; lions, leopards, tygers, wolves, zebras, buffaloes, &c. The dante is an animal which seems peculiar to this country; it is shaped and coloured much like an ox; though not so large; its horns are like those of an he-goat, but very smooth and shining, and of a blackish hue, of which the natives make a great variety of toys and baubles. The skin of this creature is commonly bought by the Portuguese, and sent into Germany to be tanned; and made into targets, which are then called dantes. The natives use the raw hides dried to make their shields, which are so tough, that no arrow or dart can go through them, and large enough to cover the whole body. The crea-



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They also make sabres and poignards, the handles of which are very ingeniously ornamented and inlaid; the scabbards are enriched with plates of gold.

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ture which they call impangazza, hath two horns growing out of the forehead, and in other respects is not unlike the buffalo. The nsossi is of the bigness of a cat, of an ash colour, and hath two small horns on its head. It is perhaps the most fearful creature that lives, ever in motion, and starting at the least noise or breath of air; even when it is drinking, it swallows one single gulp and runs away, as if pursued, and returns with the like fear till it hath satiated its thirst; it doth the same when browsing on the grass at every blade it takes in its mouth. Its flesh has an exquisite taste, and the natives prefer its skin to that of any other creature, to make strings for their bows. The nsima, or civet cat, is the true creature from which that odoriferous drug is taken, and when genuine, they value it at the rate of gold dust. The fura is a species of land rat, which burrows under the ground like moles. The flesh is so exquisite, that a feast would be looked upon defective without it. The forests abound with wild dogs or jackalls, which, like the wolves, prey upon the tame cattle, and are so fierce, that they will fly upon armed men, and attack whole droves of cows, goats, or sheep. There is another singular quadruped, which never sets its feet upon the ground, but it dies soon after; it keeps itself constantly upon



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They prepare and tan, in a very perfect manner, the skins of their cattle, and even those of Hippopotami,

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the trees. It is called entiengia, and is very small, and its skin so beautifully spotted, that none but the kings of Congo, and such chiefs as obtain the privilege from him, have the liberty of wearing it: and even the kings of Loango, Cacongo, and Gey, receive that extraordinary fur as a considerable present, and a particular favour. Ostriches are of surprising magnitude and beauty, and in great plenty. Their feathers, mixed with those of peacocks, which are here no less numerous and beautiful, are used instead of ensigns and standards, and made into umbrellas. There are a great variety of parrots; but the most esteemed birds of all are those which they style, by way of excellence, the *birds of music*. They are somewhat bigger than canary birds, their bills red, their feathers of the same colour: some of them, however, are green or mixed, and only their bills and feet black; others are grey, others dun, and some all white, or all black; which last sort is the most admired for the sweetness of its note. The fish in this part is in great plenty and variety, both from the sea, and from the multitude of rivers which intersect the country. The picomarina, so called from the resemblance of its mouth to the beak of a woodpecker, is a sea-fish of a large size and prodigious strength. The corvo marina, or sea raven, is about six feet long, and big in proportion. They are likewise infested with a vast variety of serpents, some of a

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panthers, leopards, and lions. They possess the secret of making morocco, that of rendering the skins of their

monstrous length and thickness; rattle-snakes, vipers, and other venomous reptiles, whose bite is often inevitable death. Scorpions, and other venomous insects, both flying and reptile, are likewise in great variety. The most pernicious and dangerous kind is the cimex, of which they have six different species, of different colours and sizes, and all of them formidable, both on account of their prodigious number, and the mischiefs they do, not only to the fruits of the earth, but even to men and beasts, whom they will surround in the night, in such swarms, that they will attack and eat them. Some infest the houses in such numbers as to undermine the foundations; a third sort of a white and red colour, though very small, will gnaw their way through the hardest wood, penetrate into a strong wooden chest, and, in a little while, devour the clothes, linen, and every thing that is in it, except metals and stones. A fourth sort, small and black, leave a most intolerable stench upon every thing they touch, whether clothes or household stuff, which are not easily sweetened again. A fifth sort harbours chiefly upon the leaves and branches of trees; and if a man chance to climb up to save himself from a wild beast, he is so tormented by them, that nothing but the dread of the jaws of the one could make him undergo the stings of the other. The sixth live wholly under ground in a



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lambs as thin as paper, and of giving them a polish, and dying the surface with different colours; they use these

larvæ state, till age furnishes them with wings to fly; and then they rise in such swarms as darken the air, in the same manner as locusts. Amidst a great variety of these pernicious insects, they have one species of a more friendly and profitable kind, viz. the industrious bee, which furnishes the inhabitants with excellent honey and wax in such prodigious plenty, that there is scarcely a hollow tree, cliff of a rock, or cleft of the earth, in which they do not find great quantities of their combs.

Congo was discovered by the Portuguese in 1484. The discoverer was named *Diego Cam*, an expert and bold sailor. He was well received by the natives, and sent some of his men with presents to the king; but they being detained by unexpected accidents beyond the promised time of their return, Cam was obliged to sail away without them, and took with him four young Congoese, as hostages for the safety of his countrymen. These he taught the Portuguese language, in which they made such progress, that King John was highly pleased, and sent them back next year to Congo with rich presents; charging them to exhort their monarchs, in his name, to become converts to the Christian religion, and to permit it to be propagated through his dominions. An alliance was concluded between the two monarchs, which continues to this day.

Congo, being situated within the torrid zone, is liable to excessive heats: as it lies on the southern side

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skins as ornaments to cover the saddles of their horses, the sheaths of their weapons, to make harness, boots,

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of the equinoctial, the seasons are of course opposite to ours. They reckon only two principal seasons, the summer and winter; the former begins in October, and continues till February or March, during which time the sun's rays dart with such intensity, that the atmosphere appears to an European to be in a flame. The excessive heat, however, is mitigated by the equal length of the days and nights, as well as by the winds, breezes, rains, and dews. The winter takes up the other part of the year; and is said by the natives to be proportionably cold, though to an European it would appear sensibly hot. They divide the year into twelve lunar months, and begin it in September. They have also weeks, consisting of four days only, the last of which is their sabbath, and on it they religiously abstain from every kind of work.

With respect to the populousness of the kingdom of Congo, some authors have represented it as thinly peopled. The accounts of the Portuguese missionaries are, however, directly opposite to these. They found the country for the most part covered with towns and villages, and swarming with inhabitants; the cities well filled with people, particularly the metropolis, which was said to contain above 50,000 souls. We are told that Bamba is alone able to raise 200,000 fighting men, and was formerly in a condition to raise double



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slippers, and other articles, which are executed with a great deal of taste and propriety.

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that number; and that the army of the King of Congo, in 1665, consisted of 900,000 fighting men, who were attended by an infinite number of women, children, and slaves. The number of slaves sold annually by the king of Congo, if we can believe the missionaries, seldom amounted, *communibus annis*, to less than 15 or or 16,000. But the missionaries were too apt to deal in the marvellous.

The complexion of the natives, both men and women, is quite black, though not in the same degree. Their hair is black, and finely curled; their eyes are a fine lively black; but they have neither flat noses, nor thick lips, like the Nubians and other negroes. Their stature is of the middle size; and, excepting their dark complexion, they much resemble the Portuguese. In their temper they are mistrustful, envious, jealous, and treacherous; and where they once take an affront, they will spare no pains to be avenged of their enemy. There is no such thing among them as natural affection. A husband, if an heathen, may take as many wives as he pleases; and if a christian, may have any number of concubines, whom he may divorce at pleasure, and even sell them, though with child. So little regard have they for their children, that there is scarcely one among them who will not sell a son or a daughter, or perhaps both, for a piece of cloth, a collar or girdle of coral or beads, and often for a bottle of wine or

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They manufacture all their stirrups and bridles; the stirrups are made in the form of a wooden shoe, which

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brandy. Their native religion is idolatry, accompanied with the most detestable rights invented by their gangas or priests; and even in those parts where Christianity is professed, it is so darkened by superstition and idolatrous practices, that we may justly question whether the people are any gainers by the exchange.

St. Salvador is the capital of the Portuguese settlements in this country, and is said to contain 40,000 inhabitants, about 4000 of which are whites, descended from the Portuguese settlers. The chief commodities they bring hither are either the product of Brazil, or European manufactories. The former consists chiefly of grains, fruits, plants, &c. the latter of Turkey carpets, stuffs, copper, brass, and a variety of silver, glass, gold, and other trinkets; woollen, linen, and a number of iron utensils; they return slaves, elephant's teeth, furs, and other commodities of the country. Congo is divided into several provinces. The principal rivers are the Zaire, the Dando, the Coanza, the Vambra, and the Barbela.—*Editor.*

☞ For the text belonging to this note, see page 227.

* This is something done after the manner of the Arabians: *Arabesque*, *Grotesque*, and *Moresque*, are terms applied to such paintings, ornaments of freizes, &c. wherein there are no human or animal figures but which consist wholly of imaginary foliages, plants, stalks, &c. The words take their rise from hence that

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receives only one-half of the foot; the bridles are made in one entire piece.

Their sandals and slippers are ornamented on the inside with paintings and figures; every thing which has a double use is distinguished by different characters, so that what is intended for the right side, can never be applied to the left: indeed, the pre-eminence of the right over the left is very generally observed, both by the Moors and the negroes.

They have also weavers, who with looms extremely simple and portable, and the apparatus of which is far from being complicated, manufacture stuffs in goats and camels hair, as well as in woollen and cotton, the width of which is never more than half an Egyptian cubit.

The Moors have a race of horses which descend from those of Arabia, and preserve in a great degree the beauty and perfection of their originals; in their oases they devote themselves to rearing and perpetuating fine races of this animal, and, like the Arabs, they know their alliances and genealogy.

The horses are too well known to require, from my pen, any detail of their perfections or their good qualities; I made use of one in 1786, when I performed a journey by land from Senegal to Goree, and was obliged

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the Moors, Arabs, and other Mahometans, use these kinds of ornaments, their religion forbidding them to make any images, or figures of men, or other animals.—*Editor.*

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to traverse a desart of fifty leagues, the soil of which was a fine moving sand.

A black horse, of about five years old, had so much ardour and impetuosity, that before I could mount it with any degree of pleasure, I was compelled to make one of my negroes gallop it for about an hour in the sand, and even after this exercise, it was all day full of impatience and spirit.

It would be very easy to procure every year sixteen mares and four stallions of this breed, which crossed with our Norman and Limousin species, would doubtless produce a very fine race. I have also thought that it might be endeavoured to transport these fine Moorish stallions into the spacious pasturages of our French Guyana, and there to propagate them with the American mares. I doubt not, that by rearing them with attention, and putting them out to grass during the dry season, we might breed a race of horses in Guyana, which would be equally useful and valuable.

The price of these horses has been rather exaggerated, and it is said they sell for ten or twelve slaves. It is true that the negro kings, to whom this sort of money cost nothing either in procuring, or expending, have sometimes paid twelve slaves for a fine horse; but it must not be supposed that this is the necessary price for such a one of the Moorish race; and besides, these captives do not represent more than four hundred livres per head in merchandize; the price of a horse, therefore, at the rate of twelve captives, will be about four thousand eight hundred livres.

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But after having questioned many Moors, and Sydy Moktar in particular, relative to the price at which we might obtain these horses of the finest race, provided we took a number of them together, I was assured, that we might have twenty choice ones at the rate of fifty pieces of guinea per head: this would amount to 1000 pieces of guinea at a time, and would be considered by the Moors of the desart as a very considerable price.

It may then be considered as certain, that for 25,000 francs we might yearly procure, from the oases of Zaara, twenty animals, either stallions or mares, which would be selected from among the most perfect races.

These horses have not so elegant a head and rump as those of Arabia; but the legs, the chest, and the body, have much finer proportions. I have seen some of a most beautiful colour; many of them were of a charming cream tint, others were of a slate colour, and had fine coats and black tails; there were likewise some of a most exquisite black.

These horses are very mild and tractable; the Moors learn them a variety of singular turns and movements; they kneel down to be mounted even by children of six years old; and if the little creature happens to fall, the horse not only stops near it, but caresses it, and endeavours, by every solicitation in his power, to induce the child to remount.

These horses are instructed to bow the head at the command of its master; it bends the right knee first, and then the left, and in this manner walks along.

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They perform the most rapid evolutions with their heads turned towards their tails, and their rapidity in galloping, is at least equal to the best English coursers.

When a Moor has ridden his horse for some hours, the mouth and sides of the animal is covered with blood. These barbarians are however expert horsemen; they raise their legs like the Cossacks; but they are so adroit that we may see them while on a full gallop, adjust and throw behind them a sagaye. They throw these lances with so much accuracy, that they never miss their mark; it is by the force and celerity of these horses, that they stupify and overcome the ostriches, which they chace from the desart plains surrounding their oases.

In these interior residences of Zaara, which are the chief places of the tribes, the Moors also rear numerous flocks of sheep, goats, and oxen; these have not such long and large tails as those sheep which in Europe are called Barbary sheep; the species which are found in Zaara, are much stronger than ours in France; they have a longer body, more elevated legs, and hair instead of wool; this hair is very thick, though not curly: the sheep are very seldom white; all that have come within my observation, have been either black, brown, red, or yellow; when they have been fed sometime, they become very fat and their flesh is excellent.

In these solitudes, they also rear a vast numberof oxen, and among the number of those which I saw, two species were distinguishable; the one was much smaller than the common run of oxen in Europe, but in every other respect similar; these small oxen of the desart

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have the same formation, and the same colour as ours, but they are more gentle and active ; the other is a large and strong kind, with a hump upon its shoulders, and is in fact a degenerate species of the bison.

These hump-backed oxen are in general much longer and taller than those of France, they have a very voluminous dewlap which descends almost to the ground ; their horns are very large and handsome, and nearly unité at the points ; but the distinctive character of this species, is a large fleshy wen, which rises between the shoulders ; this mass of flesh forms a projection of nearly a foot, and is esteemed by epicures as a most delicious morsel.

These animals are strong and docile ; the Moors like to use them for the saddle, and their gait is soft and easy ; instead of a bit, they pass a cord of camels' hair through the nostrils ; to this substitute for a bit, they fasten some smaller cords, which are twisted like a bridle, and which is fastened behind the hump ; they saddle them like horses, and without being much excited, they go very quick, travelling sometimes twelve or fifteen leagues a day without being fatigued ; they are susceptible of attachment towards those who feed and habitually ride them, and willingly obey their commands ; their flesh is good, tender, and succulent, and they generate with common oxen.

The Moors sometimes travel over Africa with flocks of four hundred oxen at a time, and they sell them at places a thousand leagues from their desarts ; when they perform these journies they are protected by the negro princes, through whose territories they pass, and



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still more by the *grisgris*, which is given them by their Marabouhts.

It is a singularly interesting spectacle to see these savages cross the largest rivers in Africa, with their numerous flocks.

I have seen it twice; the first time was at Albreda, in the river of Gambia; the second at the island of the Senegal. I shall here give an account of the passage of a troop of oxen, amounting to upwards of four hundred, which took place between Albreda situated on the right bank of the Gambia, and the village of Bahio on its left; the river was at this place more than three thousand five hundred toises broad.

The flock was collected all together on the shore to the South of Albreda, where the Moors suffered them to rest some hours without allowing them to graze; the conductors of this flock, were about a hundred and twenty, well armed with fusils, saygayes, sabres, and poignards.

When they were ready to commence the passage, they roused the oxen, collected them together, and set up all at once a prodigious howling; they then chose from among the troop forty predestined animals, *(animaux predilection)* who were to form the vanguard; among these were also those who were to swim at the head of the flock, and who were doubtless the best swimmers, as well as being the most active and docile.

Ten Moors were also chosen to conduct this vanguard and each of these conductors seemed to be very careful in the choice of the animal which he intended to mount for the purpose of cross in gthe river.



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Nine of these leaders were young men from sixteen to eighteen years of age, and the tenth was about forty or fifty; they fastened to the horns of each of the oxen, a cord about four feet long, made of camels' hair; they then mounted them in a standing posture, their feet strongly pressed against the projection on the back of the animal, their body upright, with a slight inclination backwards, and sustained by means of the rope fastened to their horns; their arms and cloaths were tied in a bundle on their heads.

When every thing was thus arranged, the vanguard was led to the border of the river; there the conductors again gave a unanimous howl; this was answered by the oxen of the vanguard, and was again re-echoed by the Moors and oxen of the main body.

Immediately after the vanguard entered the river excited by the voice of their conductors. The eldest of the Moors was at the head, and his ox stemmed the current with a great deal of courage; the others followed this leader, animated by the young Moors who unceasingly cheared them with talking.

When they were all plunged into the river, the picture became highly singular; nothing but the heads of the oxen were to be seen, and the upper part of the bodies of their conductors, who leaning backwards supported themselves firmly by the cords.

The chief of the file always kept at the head, the others following exactly in his track; every thing was directed by him; they were three hours performing this passage, and during this time the remainder of the flock continued on the right bank close to the river, keeping

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their eyes attentively fixed on those who were passing over.

When the vanguard had arrived on the opposite shore, the conductors gave three loud cries, which was answered by the oxen with three loud bellowings: this noise was distinctly heard on the coast they had just quitted.

These signals were repeated by the Moors and oxen of the main body, and it was then easy to remark the impatience of the animals, who fixed their sight on the vanguard which was safely arrived, and who testified by their motions their desire to join them.

The main body was then collected together; they chose in the same manner a number of oxen to be at the head, and which were about twenty: these predestined animals were mounted by twenty Moors in the same manner as was observed in forming the vanguard.

Five Moors put themselves at the head of the flock very near each other; the usual howlings were repeated; the chief plunged into the river; all the oxen followed them; and once more stemming the tide, this picture was considerably more interesting, as the number of the Moors was greater.

Many of the young men swam in the midst of the troops, supporting themselves from time to time by the horns of the animals: this second passage lasted four hours.

It is thus that the Moors cross with their oxen the largest rivers, and never suffer themselves to be checked



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or intercepted in any direction which they wish to follow.

I was in the month of January, 1787, witness of a similar passage, which took place one league above the mouth of the Senegal, opposite the village of Babaghé, in a part of the river which was more than 2000 toises broad.

I shall close these observations on the Moors of Zaara, by observing, that these savages, whose existence is hardly known in Europe, possess by nature a degree of intelligence, wit, address, and docility, which renders them adequate to every thing which they wish to undertake.

Their language is a very gross kind of Arabic: but it appears that its want of polish arises rather from their pronunciation, than from any defect of the language itself, since many of these Moors speak it very purely, and make themselves perfectly understood to their countrymen.

If in the general views which Europe may have with regard to Africa, she should think of forming some establishments for the purpose of civilizing this part of the world, France would doubtless concur with, and become active, in such a laudable undertaking; and I have already sufficiently shewn, how eminently easy it would be for us, from our situation in Africa, to form connections with the interior nations of this continent.

The most certain means of effecting the civilization of the black nations bordering on the banks of the Senegal, would be to commence our operations with the Moors of Zaara.

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The advantage of speaking their language, and of making ourselves understood, would most assuredly produce more confidence and freedom in our concerns with these savages; it would therefore be expedient to instruct a certain number of young Frenchmen in the Arabic language, and to employ them among the Moors; it would also be requisite to obtain, from these people, some children from eight to ten years old, which might be sent to Paris, there instructed in different trades, and sent back to their families, when they had attained their fifteenth year: thus they would transport into Africa the seeds of morality, of industry, and of social order.

If we should ever inspire the people of the interior of Africa with a desire to cultivate cotton, indigo, rice, and even coffee, the Moors, who perform with their oxen and camels very extensive journies, would be the best possible agents for this commerce; they would procure these different commodities from the centre of Africa, and bring them to our factories of the Senegal, and on the coasts.

If France should one day be convinced of all the influence which she might exert over that part of Africa comprized between the thirtieth and fortieth degree of North latitude, and between the thirtieth longitudinal degree of the island of Ferro and the Ocean, I will venture to assert, not only that the centre of this continent would then be known, but that the productions of the central countries will pass into our hands, and will be exchanged for the produce of our in-



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dustry, while the Moors, as well as the Mandings, would become the agents of an immense commerce over the whole of this part of Africa.

Savage people are not promoters of the consumption of merchandize; while, on the contrary, civilized nations become more and more so every day; it would therefore be a very laudable object for public support, to undertake the civilization of Africa; to create new objects of exchange, and new consumers for the produce of our industry and manufactures. In executing this, the government should not be discouraged by the uncertainty and the tardiness of success; for great nations should be considered as eternal: let it likewise be remembered, that in securing the happiness and prosperity of present generations, we ought also to open the way for the happiness and prosperity of those which are yet unborn.

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## CHAP. VIII.

### REMARKS ON THE DROMEDARY.

Cameleos quibus Arabia maxime abundant animalia sancta ü apellant ex insigni comodo quod ex ipsis, indiginæ accipiunt.—*Prosper Alpin Hist. Ægypt. Part. I. p.* 225.

*The Moors of the southern extremities of Zaara rear a great many dromedaries, and they alone sell them in the western countries of Africa to the North of the Line—These animals are reared by the Moors in the same manner as they are by the Arabs—Of the walk of the dromedary—Of his courage in war—Of his five stomachs—Of his sobriety and abstinence—Of that instinct which it possesses of discovering, at a great distance, where there are sources of fresh water—Of some other characteristics of the dromedary—Uses which might be made of them, for undertaking enterprizes into the interior of Africa.*

THOUGH the dromedary and the camel, which form but one species, is well known to every one, yet this quadruped is such an extraordinary creature, and is so peculiarly adapted by Divine Providence, for the service of man in the sandy desarts of Africa and Asia; it is so admirably organized for sustaining the

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burning atmosphere in which it is doomed to exist, and so wonderfully capable of the services which it is called upon to perform; able to endure that astonishing abstinence to which it is unceasingly condemned, that it would be impossible to omit the present opportunity of presenting a few remarks on this singular animal.

The Moors, in their oases of Zaara, rear a great many dromedaries, or more properly speaking, camels, with one bunch or protuberance on the back; they have numerous troops of them and dispose of them to the negroes, who might however rear them themselves, though they decline this, and purchase what they want from the Moors.

The species of the dromedary is the only kind known in this part of western Africa; the camel with two bunches is extremely rare there, and I have even reason to believe that it does not exist.

The slavery of the dromedary, and its domestic state, may be traced to the earliest ages of the world; for this animal is not to be found in its natural or savage state, and no where does it exist on the face of the earth but with man, and in the service of man. It is not possible to decide whether the dromedary or the camel may be considered as the type of the species, and which of them have retained its original conformation. But we may reasonably believe, that the dromedary or camel, with one bunch, is the primitive race, and that the camel with two, is a variety of the species which has arisen from more temperate and fertile climates than those in which the primitive race of the dromedary first breathed; and in fact it is in the northern coun-

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tries of Persia, India, and China, that the camel with two hunches is most numerously found *. The primitive race of this animal is accustomed to that climate, but it undergoes some change in its form; and it is well worthy of remark, that the dromedary-camel, though a native of the hottest regions in the world, created and particularly destined, by its structure and organization, to exist in the burning desarts of Africa and Asia, between the eighteenth and thirty-fifth degree of North latitude, is nevertheless, by the care of man, brought to live, to procreate, and to labour, like a common beast of burthen among the Calmouks, at Orenberg, on the northern banks of the lake of Baykal. and in many other parts of Siberia, even to the fifty-third degree of North latitude, which is distant from its native country and climate near eight hundred leagues towards the North pole; and it is astonishing, that notwithstanding this considerable transposition, the camel still retains its strength, and has indeed experienced no transmutation except that of having two bunches instead of one.

I think, however, if we observe attentively the dromedary of Zaara and Arabia with the camel of the northern Tartars, we may trace some very obvious distinctions, not only in the perfection of their internal organization, but in the dryness and elasticity of their nerves and muscles, and in their capability of sup-

* This species is called *Camelus Bactrianus*, and is very distinct from the other, not only in its external conformation, but also in its habits and uses.—*Editor.*

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porting, at the same time the most astonishing abstinence, and the greatest fatigues.

The Moor, like the Arab, is destined to a wandering, difficult, and barbarous life; hence he early accustoms himself to the greatest labour, and becomes habituated to every species of privation; he must be able to pass sleepless nights, to endure hunger and thirst, to live exposed to the devouring winds of the East, and to the burning rays of the tropical sun; he must breathe an atmosphere always impregnated with the sands, by which he is surrounded, and which he unceasingly traverses. If then the dromedary, which is his companion and slave, were not inured in the same manner, the very end of its creation would be deficient; but its education is entirely conducted with the same views, nor is its infancy more happy in the sands of Zaara, than in those of Lybia and Arabia.

His rigid course of instruction commences a month after his birth; from that moment the little being is separated from his mother, who is no longer allowed to approach him but at stated hours, while the unfortunate youngling is thus compelled to learn abstinence; they permit it to have only a part of the milk, destined for him by nature, and which is in abundant profusion in the dugs of the mother. He dares not drink but seldom, and then very sparingly, and from the earliest days of his existence he is taught sobriety.

Soon after this they condemn him to prison and to torture; his legs are tied under his belly, and he is placed in this position, in order that he may acquire an habit of assuming it; for it is the one which he must

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adopt when he receives and discharges his burthen; his body is covered with carpet, or a piece of a tent, which only leaves the head and neck free, and that he may not move or rise up, the borders of this covering is fastened down by a variety of hard and heavy substances.

In this cruel prison, he passes four months; but severe as it undoubtedly is, it becomes the means of superinducing upon him a habit of squatting down, which is for ever afterwards natural. When these four months of torture have elapsed, the young camels are all of them enclosed together in a park; here they are attended twice a day, by children from nine to ten years old, who carry them their food, which is only the milk of the female, mingled with water. It is asserted, that the young dromedaries soon learn to recognize the children of their master, and when ever they see them, they immediately assemble round them.

When they reach the enclosure, where these young dromedaries are confined, they hold in one hand the vase which contains the milk, and in the other a little switch, with which they strike the animals on the legs; at this signal they immediately kneel down, and they soon learn to assume this situation at the simple sound of the whip. In fact, the obedience of the dromedary, in taking this attitude at the slightest intimation of his master all the rest of his life, is truly admirable.

At the tender age of six or seven months, they accustom the young animal to sleep with a burthen on its back; the weight of this is augmented in proportion to its



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strength and age; and it is thus they teach them to become, according to Buffon, "a living carriage, which is sometimes left loaded for many days together, without a single moment of relaxation."

It must be confessed that this discipline is indispensable; for the natural elevation of the arms of a man not being sufficient to reach the bunch of a dromedary, it would become a real inconvenience to load on his back a large and heavy burthen; but on the contrary, this operation is altogether as easy, from the habit which the animal acquires, of kneeling down and crouching almost to the earth, whenever he receives or discharges his burthen.

The Moors never keep but one male dromedary for twelve females. All such as are destined for the war are emasculated, and hence they become more tractable, and capable of being used for a variety of purposes: on the contrary, such as are unmutilated, are extremely indocile during rutting time, becoming sometimes furious, and frequently attack and destroy animals and men.

The Moors choose the smallest and most active of their dromedaries for training to the course and the field; it is even probable that they have two distinct races, one of which is smaller than the other; the manner in which they train them for the course, is by making them run with horses, and this rivalry produces a considerable degree of emulation.

The Moorish horses, which are very spirited, always get the start in the commencement of the race; but after a few hours, the horse becomes exhausted from

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fatigue; he is compelled to slacken his pace, and finally to stop; the dromedary, on the contrary, pursues his road, can continue it during twenty hours, and is able to resume it for four successive days, during which time he passes over a space of 240 leagues, and this with a very quick pace.

On the occasions of extraordinary travelling, the dromedaries are nourished with balls made of millet, mixed with gum; they generally give to each animal three of these balls in the morning, and the same quantity at night; they do not weigh altogether more than two pounds; and this food, which is employed only upon particular occasions, satisfies, during four-and-twenty hours, this abstemious animal, and maintains him in perfect vigour and activity.

The dromedaries employed for burthens and travelling have only a simple halter; but those for the course and the field, which are frequently mounted, have, instead of a bit, a ring or buckle passed through the skin above the nostrils, which always remains there; to this they fasten the reins, which they use to regulate the movements of the animal.

During a journey by land, which I made in 1786, from the island of the Senegal to that of Goree, and of which further notice will be taken in some succeeding chapters, I traversed one of these uninhabited and vacant countries, which are frequented only at intervals by man. I travelled for five days over a desart region enclosed on one side by the solitary ocean, and on the other by arid and uncultivated downs,



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where nature is absolutely destitute and exposed; where the heat of the solar rays is actually insupportable; where a sandy and sullen horizon presents to the traveller neither trees which may afford him shelter, nor a source of pure water, which may calm his thirst, nor any individual object which can recall the idea of living nature. *

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* The poetical reader will compare this description of Golberry with the beautiful and impressive lines of the sometimes sublime and neglected Collins:

"In silent horror, o'er the boundless waste,
The driver Hassan with his camels past;
One cruise of water on his back he bore,
And his light scrip contain'd a scanty store;
A fan of painted feathers in his hand
To guard his shaded face from scorching sand.
The sultry sun had gained the middle sky,
And not a tree and not an herb was nigh;
The beasts with pain their dusty way pursue,
Shrill roar'd the winds, and dreary was the view!"

* * * * * * * *

"Ye mute companions of my toils, that bear
In all my griefs a more than equal share!
Here, where no springs in murmurs break away,
Or moss-crown'd fountains mitigate the day,
In vain ye hope the green delight to know,
Which plains more bless'd, or verdant vales bestow;

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In these situations, we almost imagine ourselves as totally cut off from the civilized world; we feel a strong sensation of melancholy, which I endeavoured to dissipate with those who shared my fate.

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Here rocks alone, and tasteless sands are found,
And faint and sickly winds for ever howl around".

* * * * * * *

" O cease my fears! All frantic as I go,
When thought creates unnumber'd scenes of woe,
What if the lion in his rage I meet!
Oft in the dust I view his printed feet;
And fearful oft, when day's declining light
Yields her pale empire to the mourner night,
By hunger rouzed he scours the groaning plain,
Gaunt wolves and sullen tigers in his train;
Before them death with shrieks directs their way,
Fills the wild yell, and leads them to their prey.
At that dead hour, the silent asp shall creep,
If aught of rest I find, upon my sleep;
Or some swoln serpent twist his scales around,
And wake to anguish with a burning wound."

*Vide* Eclogue II.

If any thing can add to the beauty of these lines, it is that they unite the importance of truth to the embellishments of fiction. As Collins knew how to draw from nature, he knew also how to adorn with the splendour of imagery, and the elegance of language, even the most barren topics of human knowledge.—*Editor.*



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I had with me a number of dromedaries, and in the silence of this solitude I observed and pitied their unhappy fate; children of a steril earth, born amidst the sands of the desart, and destined to become wanderers all their lives.

It was here I admired the obedience, the resignation, and the unalterable patience, of this animal, the first companion of man, and his oldest servant; for his servitude may be dated from the earliest existence of the world, and from that period ungrateful man has exercised over him all the harshness of his inexorable character, has subjected him to the yoke of his tyrannical authority, and condemned him to eternal servitude.

My dromedaries travelled at their usual rate, but I wished to know also their different paces. This animal has three; the walk, the trot, and the gallop. Its pace is a kind of amble, which fatigues the rider very much, unless he has been long used to it. When he walks, he advances nearly together two feet of the same side, and then those of the other, from which results a kind of equilibrium extremely harsh; the loins of the rider suffer considerably from these repeated joltings, and I was unable to sustain the fatigue of it longer than two hours at a time; but I had with me two Moorish horses, which I mounted occasionally as a relief.

At their ordinary pace, my dromedaries travelled three thousand three hundred and sixty French toises per hour, or the seven-fifth of one of our leagues of two thousand four hundred toises: this is their natural pace, which they can continue during ten hours per

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day, without being fatigued. At this rate, we can easily perform journies of fifteen leagues by travelling only six hours in the morning, and a little more than four in the evening, besides being able to rest each day fourteen hours.

Hence with good dromedaries, strong and healthy travellers may, without any extraordinary labour or fatigue, arrive in fifty days at the very centre of Africa in its widest extent; and the most considerable diameter of this continent, from Cape Verd to Cape Gardefu, which is fifteen hundred leagues, might with dromedaries, if there existed no other obstacles, be traversed without fatigue in four months.

The equanimity, the slowness, or the utmost rapidity of pace of the dromedaries in a march, are entirely dependant on those who conduct them; indeed obedience to the voice of their conductors is a capital point in the discipline of these animals, whose life is passed in travelling.

They proceed either quick or slow, according to the tone and movement of the song of the camel conductor, who is always placed at the head of the caravan; they follow in a file, with a pensive and melancholy air, without ever wandering or deviating from the direct path, and observing the cadence of the song which is sung by their leader, who, when he wishes either to slacken or increase their pace, slackens or increases his ditty accordingly.

Often in these variations of progression, they are rouzed by a tone of voice more elevated, or by a slight



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whistling. These trifling intimations are immediately perceived, and attended to; so perfect is the submission of this good animal, who spurns at injurious treatment, who becomes stubborn when the whip or the spur is applied, but who brightens into activity at the song of man, who forgets his pain at the sound of an instrument, and who bending beneath hunger, thirst, and fatigue, resumes his courage at the voice of his master.

I wished to try the trot of the dromedary, but it appeared to me insupportable. It must either be an Arab or a Moor, who can trot this animal for any length of time. I could not support this torment for more than a quarter of an hour, which was sufficient to make me sore all over the rest of the day, and even an access of fever was the consequence of my curiosity. It is impossible to form an idea of a jolting more horrible and painful; nay, the power of keeping one's self on the animal, when it is going a full trot, appeared to me extremely difficult.

It is nevertheless with this trot of their dromedaries, that the Moors, like the Arabs, execute those journies of sixty and seventy leagues per day, which they continue sometimes for five days together, and by means of which they gain, in that period, a space of more than three hundred leagues, between them, and those whom they have pillaged and despoiled.

It is from their education and barbarous mode of living, that they are enabled to support these violent fatigues, which however never take place but when they wish to escape quickly from an enraged enemy, and to

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shelter themselves from his vengeance; or when they surprise a caravan, or a village, which they pillage, and then endeavour to avoid the pursuit which may result from these acts of violence.

The numerous quarrels which take place between the Moorish tribes of Zaara, are decided by the fate of battle, and these contests are generally concluded, by the conflict of warriors mounted on dromedaries.

This kind of cavalry forms the *corps de reserve*, and is never used but when it is necessary to decide the victory. These charges are made at a full trot; the two adverse parties meet, commingle, and fight arm to arm.

The Moors say, that in these battles the dromedary shews the greatest courage; that he rushes furiously upon the dromedary of the enemy, striking him violently on the head and breast, biting him with rage, and tearing off whole mouthfuls of flesh: they never quit the attack, till one of the two is disabled; and on these occasions they are so much more determined and intrepid than their masters, that nothing can check their fury and impetuosity. It is difficult to believe, that an animal so mild and patient in every other respect, should be in war so uncommonly courageous.

The gallop of the dromedary is the most rapid and lively of all his motions; it is less painful to the rider, than the trot, but more fatiguing to the animal, who cannot continue it longer than one or two days at the most. The Moors declare that, at this pace, they can easily travel a hundred leagues in twenty hours. After the first course, they repose four hours, and the drome-

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daries are fed with those balls of millet already mentioned, and are allowed to drink fermented milk, which they carry in leathern bags. The men take only a few ounces of gum, mixed with the gravy of meat, which forms their entire food; they never make their dromedaries gallop, but after having lost a battle, and when they are anxious to escape from a conquering and enraged enemy who would massacree them without mercy if they were overtaken. When they foresee that they are likely to have occasion to gallop their dromedaries, they prepare them for it some days previous, by exercise and good nourishment.

In 1786, I saw near two hundred men belonging to the army of Hilly-Koury, fly thus after being defeated by Hamet Moktar; they passed within sight of fort St. Louis of the Senegal, mounted two and two on their dromedaries, and crossing with prodigious rapidity, the tongue of sand which separates the river from the sea. They had fled before the end of the battle, as soon as they perceived the victory was decided against them. They had only to make a journey of twenty hours, in order to reach the mouth of the Senegal in the environs of St. Louis; they swam across the river, and took refuge in the territories of Damel, an ally of the vanquished monarch. The dromedaries swim badly, and consequently many of them would have perished in this passage, had not the Moors opportunely arrived, and conveyed them safely into the territory of Cayor.

In the journey which I made with dromedaries I had also an opportunity of observing their astonishing sobriety; it can indeed hardly be conceived to what an ex-

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tent these animals are accustomed to observe abstinence.

But this faculty of withholding from drink for a number of days and of sustaining the most rigorous sobriety in the midst of the greatest fatigues, is not merely the effect of education, but results principally from the conformation of this animal, and which may in this point of view be considered as a phenomenon.

It is known that independently of the four stomachs which all ruminating animals have, the dromedary possesses a fifth, which serves him as a kind of cistern; this last stomach he fills by immense draughts, when his good fortune presents him with a spring of fresh water, a thing very rare in the sandy desarts of Africa; in this receptacle the water is reserved quite pure, and as wholesome after having remained there a month, as it is the first day.

This fifth stomach is large enough to contain a considerable quantity of liquid, and is so constructed that the other aliments cannot mingle with it, by which means whenever the animal has occasion to moisten the herbs, with which he is nourished, and which is almost always burnt and dry, and thus prepare it for deglutition, he forces a part of this water into the œsophagus, by a simple contraction of the muscles.

This astonishing mechanism, though very well known must yet for ever be admired; for it is in consequence of such a conformation, that the dromedary is enabled to live without drinking for the astonishing space of ten days, in a country burned by a glowing sun, where thirst is the most dreadful of all torments; by this organization also, it is enabled to drink a prodigious

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quantity of water at one time, and which remains a long while limpid and pure in this reservoir.

The Moors who travel through the desart also affirm, that either from instinct, from a sense of smelling, or from some other cause, the dromedaries when they have passed eight or ten days without drinking, smell water at the distance of more than half a league, and that the moment this olfactory power, which is doubtless in high degree delicate, warns them of the existence of wholesome water, or of a fresh spring, they run towards it at a very quick trot, and in a direct liue. This fact has likewise been affirmed by every one who have performed extensive journies over this desart.

In order justly to appreciate the importance of the benevolence of the Creator, in giving the dromedary to that ramification of human nature which is doomed to traverse these immense solitudes exposed to the most imminent perils, and even to destruction, let us only figure to ourselves, the dreadful situation of some travellers who have lost their road in the midst of an ocean of moving sand, agitated and whirled about by impetuous winds. The horizon is no longer visible but by a weak and uncertain light; the sun is obscured by clouds of dust, which fill the space of Heaven, and incessantly gravitate again towards the earth; through this obscurity, the eye vainly endeavours to catch some indicative sign of the road which must be followed in order to reach an haven of security and rest. The water which the dromedaries carry enclosed in leathern bags, is either evaporated by the action of the solar rays or consumed or corrupted; the men and animals, ex-

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hausted by reiterated fatigues and successive days of travel, abstinence, and anguish, proceed onwards with a faint and weary step. One part of the dromedaries, have already been sacrificed, and their sides opened to procure that water which has remained pure and wholesome in these living reservoirs; but barely will it suffice to prolong for a few minutes expiring nature; the dromedaries which have survived these massacrees, enjoined by imperious necessity, are reserved as a last resource; this resource must ultimately be employed; all is then lost, and they have nothing before their eyes but despair and death. When at the last moment of these cruel extremities, the instinct of the dromedary, warns them of the proximity of a fountain; instantly he starts, his courage is re-animated, and his convulsive motions inform the despairing travellers, that the moment of deliverance is at hand; they all spring forward towards the source which is to save exhausted nature, and the dromedary, that holy, that sacred animal, thus preserves, in these dreadful circumstances, the life of man!

The feet of the dromedary are peculiarly adapted for sandy soils; they are furnished at the end with two little nails, and the under part is large, fleshy, and covered with a soft thick and callous epidermis; these feet are cloven horizontally at the bottom, about two thirds of their length. The foot of the dromedary, being thus supple and fleshy, accords admirably with the fine moving sand, for which he has been created; had it been covered with a thick horny substance, the friction of the sand, would soon produce a degree of irritation



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in the foot and leg; the horn, burnt and dried up, would become scaly, which would successively be disengaged from the foot, and the animal would be no longer able to walk; but enclosed as it is, in a soft fleshy matter, permeable by the nutritive juices, and to the humors which fly off by perspiration, it preserves all its elasticity, and is even better adapted than the foot of man for walking in those sands, which he is destined to traverse all his life.

The legs and neck of the dromedary are very long; he legs must be thus, as they frequently sink two feet in the sand, and if they had not a considerable elongation (which however is very disproportionate to the rest of the body, and has a disagreeable appearance to the eye), the belly of the animal would come in contact with the sand, and thus deprive him of the means and power of proceeding.

The length of its neck is also equally indispensable and necessary; it forms a balance, by means of which the equilibrium of the body is maintained; it is in fact a moving lever, the movements of which are requisite to render the fall of the animal gradual, when he bends his legs to lie down, and more easy when he rises up. Its head is small in proportion to its body, its nose is elongated, and cleft like that of a hare; its eyes are of a middling size, and the whole physiognomy of this animal impresses strongly the idea of calmness and humility, intermingled with a deep melancholy aspect. Nor is this astonishing, when we reflect, that from the first days of its existence, it is condemned to torture and oppression; that at no moment of its life is

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it allowed to taste the pleasures of liberty; that it is the only animal which, from its birth, is deprived of maternal attention, and the happiness of sporting round its mother; that all its days are passed in a series of privations, sufferings, and fatigues; that its whole life is laborious and painful; that it never enjoys a single moment of independence; and that it is impossible to experience the hardships of perpetual servitude with less pity, from those who inflict them, than this unfortunate animal.

The dromedaries which are reared by the Moors are in general either brown, red, or ash-coloured. It does not appear that these savages pay much attention to keeping them clean, or maintaining them in such a manner, as to obtain from hence a fine pithy hair; they nevertheless employ it for making stuffs for cloathing, and other domestic purposes; they also manufacture with it tents, the texture of which is so thick and close, that it is impervious to the rain; they even make vases or round sacks, of a foot in diameter, and eighteen inches in depth; the upper part of these vases is strengthened by bands of the same stuff, to the depth of about four inches, so that they remain naturally open. The Moors use them for fetching water, and likewise carry it in them when going on a journey, the same as we do in our wooden buckets; to the sides of these vases, near the aperture, and opposite each other, are attached a kind of handle, through which long poles are passed, and by this means they are carried. These vases of hair are so well made, that they retain the water as well as a metal or an earthen one.



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The dromedary is not completely formed until its fourth or fifth year, when they first begin to employ it, but with a great deal of care, and they are extremely cautious not to overload it; towards the sixth year, the Moors consider them as arrived at the age of puberty, and when they are eight years old, they are supposed to have attained their utmost vigour.

The ordinary price of a dromedary of this age was, in 1786, two hundred and fifty livres; four-fifths of this sum were paid in pieces of guinea, and the residue in glass trinkets, gunpowder, balls, and musket flints.

The Moors know the age of a dromedary by unequivocal signs, and which never mislead them; but as they are the only people who rear and sell these animals in all the western countries of Africa, between Zaara and the line, they preserve inviolable the secret of the signs by which they know their age, and never divulge it either to the blacks, or the Europeans who trade with them.

From hence it often happens, that in buying dromedaries persons are deceived, and the Moors sell those of five years old, which they declare to be eight. I have seen many tricks of this kind played, and one of my own dromedaries died after seven days journey, in proceeding from the Senegal to Goree, merely because it was too young; for its burthen was by no means heavy.

I am persuaded that we should run less risk of being deceived by the Moors, were we to buy from them dromedaries of an advanced age, instead of young ones, for it is easy enough to distinguish by the physiognomy, the form of the body, the quality of the hair, and the callosities of the legs and breast, whether a dro-

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medary be fifteen or twenty years old; but it appeared to me very difficult to discover, the difference between a dromedary of four or five, and one of eight years of age.

The Moors say that this animal preserves all its vigour for forty years, and that after this age its strength begins to diminish, though they commonly live to be sixty; some have been much older, but such examples are rare.

When the dromedaries become aged, and they are no longer serviceable, the Moors eat them; nearly all the kings in the vicinity of the Gambia have dromedaries, which they purchase from the Moors, who sell also a great number to the Mandings. These last dispose of them in the interior parts of Africa; and I have seen at Albreda, a convoy of fifty dromedaries, male and female, destined for Teembou, the capital of the southern Foulhas, and two hundred and fifty leagues distant from the South of Zaara. All the males of this convoy were emasculated; the Moors will not sell them in any other state, as they are doubtless anxious to reserve to themselves the whole of this branch of commerce.

If our concerns in this part of Africa should assume a degree of activity, and be extended in such a manner as I think them capable of, we must then turn our thoughts towards rearing dromedaries. The borders of the Senegal would not be a favourable place for this undertaking, for they are every year inundated by the overflow of the river; but in the countries, situated



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between its mouth and the Marigot of Salum, and still more in those of Cape Verd, the soil of which is elevated, dry, and sandy, dromedaries might be reared with as much success as in the oases of Zaara. It would doubtless require considerable skill to induce the Moors to let us have some male dromedaries fit for this purpose; but in disguising our intention of forming studs of them, and moreover by paying a considerable price for some unmutilated males, I think we might succeed in procuring a small number.

The time may come, when this animal will become not only useful, but necessary to us, and I do not think we should altogether contemn the idea of forming some studs in the vicinity of Cape Verd.

Since it is possible to convey to a very great distance, and at a very trifling expence, burthens from ten to twelve *quintaux* on these dromedaries, it may easily be conceived what advantages might be drawn from them in any enterprizes which may be undertaken, either for the purpose of carrying on an active land commerce, or a war against any African nation, or the conquest of some important country; or, finally, if a survey with an armed force were to be made of the central regions of this immense portion of Africa.

Six hundred armed men exercised, after the European manner, properly instructed in the service which would be expected from them, supported by light artillery, composed merely of four pounders, howitzers, &c. and commanded by an able and resolute general, might drive before them 20,000 Moors, and still more

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surely, 50,000 negroes. These people, destitute of all defence, and attacked by well disciplined troops, would be unable to stand against our musquetry, and still less could they endure the fire of our artillery.

If a dromedary can carry ten *quintaux*, he will very easily be able to support six soldiers; but a single dromedary might carry twelve soldiers, six of whom might march five hours per diem, while the other six might ride upon the dromedary, and *vice versa*. Hence fifty of these animals would be sufficient to convey 600 soldiers.

A piece of light artillery weighs from six to seven hundred pounds. A man might mount a dromedary carrying this burthen, which would only augment the weight by a hundred and sixty pounds; so that the animal might still convey a hundred and forty pounds of powder.

The carriages of these pieces not being intended for much work, and being used only in the time of battle, it would not be necessary to construct them so solidly as those usually made in Europe, and a dromedary might therefore carry two of them. Two hundred dromedaries would be sufficient to perform a very considerable undertaking; all the other circumstances, which would be necessary in order to insure the success of such an enterprize, would require details by far too numerous for this work; but it may be confidently affirmed, that a small army of six hundred men, arranged, organized, and directed, according to the manner which I have laid down, might have a power



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and importance in Africa, which is almost incalculable; and what I have above said, relative to the dromedary, will easily shew, that with its assistance it would be possible to undertake some very important expeditions; and whether we sought to make some warlike enterprize, or to render the intercourse easy and convenient between the countries which the Senegal ought to command, or to perform some journey into the interior, or to make some commercial connections by land, or to attempt the civilization of this considerable part of Africa; or finally, to obtain some exact, detailed, and much wished-for information relative to it, whether we would undertake one or all of these, it would be highly advantageous to form studs of dromedaries, and to be enabled to employ a vast number of these valuable and useful animals.

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## CHAP. IX.

### OF SOME OF THE PRINCIPAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF THAT PART OF THE SENEGAL COMPRISED BETWEEN PODHOR AND THE CATARACT OF THE ROCK FELOW.

*The island of Morfil—Of the Foulhas-Peuls—Of the Serrawallis negroes, whom we denominate Saracolets—The town and fort of Galum—Of the rock Felow—Of the mouth of the Felema, at Tafalisga.*

In following the contours of the Senegal, the extent from Podhor to the rock Felow, is upwards of 200 leagues, and in every part, the banks present the finest vegetation, and the most varied culture of rice, millet, maize, tobacco, indigo, cotton, and a large number of leguminous plants. The numerous productions of the countries bordering on the Senegal, will not admit of a doubt: in fact, they ought to be ranked among the most fertile of the globe, and they are adapted to the most valuable productions of nature.

The island of Morfil, and that of Bilbos, which are together about sixty-five leagues in length, by a medial breadth of three leagues, are both situated on the left bank of the main course of the river, which forms their northern border: their southern extremity is formed by an arm, which is denominated the river

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of Morfil, or Elephant's Teeth River, which last appellation takes its rise from the great number of those animals which live in troops on its banks, and are hunted by the negroes for the purpose of selling their tusks. The total superficies of these two islands form together 195 square leagues.

The escale of Cok, and the fort of Podhor, are situated at the western extremity of the island of Morfil. The two islands are under the dominion of the Foulhas-Peuls, whose throne is filled by a Marabouht Prince, who is called by the name of Siratick.

It has already been said, that the territory of these Foulhas extends more than a hundred leagues along the banks of the Senegal. The revolution which this nation has experienced; its history, its character, its manners, its government, and its natural productions, are all subjects of curiosity, but at the same time too numerous to find admittance in these fragments. It is from this nation in particular that the fleet from Galam experiences the greatest difficulties, embarrassments, and obstructions, though government might obviate them by certain measures and arrangements which are within their power.

At thirty leagues to the South of the meridianal extremity of Bilbos, we enter the territory of Galam, which is peopled by a nation of negroes, whom we call Saracolets, but whose real name is Serrawallis; Galam is the metropolis of this nation.

The Serrawallis negroes are governed by many petty princes independent of each other, and who form

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among themselves a kind of federative republic, of which Galam is the chief place; hence the King of Galam enjoys a sort of superiority over the other princes, because this principal place has become the centre of all the commerce carried on in these countries of Africa, and that the principal slave market is held there, whither they bring these unfortunate wretches from the interior regions.

These advantages have induced the Serrawallis princes to agree among themselves, that they shall occupy by rotation the throne of Galam, which, from this singular constitution, has become the domain of several families, the elder branches of which in succession, and according to a certain order become kings; and each of those princes in his turn, becoming king of Galam, receives the duties and emoluments arising from the commerce of this great market,

The ancient India Company formed establishments at Galam, and constructed a fort there of an oblong square form, flanked with four small bastions, and of which the ruins only are at present visible; they call it Fort St. Joseph It appears that the scite of this fort was badly chosen; and it would have been better if they had built it contiguous to the buildings and magazines, which belong to the merchants who frequent this mart.

In the time of the ancient India company, the fort and factory of Galam were of considerable importance, and exercised a great influence over all this part of Africa; some other fortified factories, established at



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Kaignou, near the rock Felow, and upon the Felema, was under the command of Galam.

About sixteen leagues higher up, is the cataract of the rock Felow; this rock intersects the river in its full breadth, and occasions a fall which is said to be eighty feet in height. During the dry season the bed of the river beyond the rock is nearly dry, but when the rains commence, this cataract then becomes gigantic, for the waters, which flow there in a prodigious quantity, rush down with violence, and the roar of their fall may be heard at ten leagues distance.

From the rock Felow to Sego, which is the capital of the Bambarra negroes, and is situated according to Mungo Park, on the right bank of the Niger; it is not more than a hundred and forty leagues, and I am well persuaded that by the intervention of the Manding merchants, who habitually traverse this interior country, French travellers might be able to proceed thither.

From the observations which I have made, I have reason to think that through the medium of a present of sixty or a hundred pieces of guinea, we might contract for the safety of these travellers, with the king of Sego, who is the chief of the Bambarras, and that this king would undertake to escort them with a detachment of his own guards, who would answer with their life, any injury which might happen to them; when they were arrived at Sego, they might there remain also under the immediate protection of the king, and concert with him upon the most proper means of proceeding to Thombouctou, which is not more than sixty leagues distant.

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This interesting voyage, which might be easily performed, would produce some very important information relative to the interior of Africa; and, would finally decide the question on the identity of the Niger and the Senegal. It would also shew that journies might be undertaken without any danger, into the interior of Africa, and this certainly would be attended with the most happy consequences.

It cannot be doubted that if the necessary factory at Galam be re-established, and if France gives it all that consistency which it should have, its influence would soon become very considerable, and would furnish a means of facilitating the most splendid enterprizes into the central regions of Africa.

About eight leagues below Galam, at the village of Tafalisga, the Senegal receives the river of Felema, which may be navigated during the rainy seasons by vessels of sixty tons; this river flows through the country of Bambouk, which will form the subject of the followng chapters.

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## CHAP. X.

### OF THE COUNTRY OF BAMBOUK.

*On the well founded idea of the wealth of the country of Bambouk—Situation of this country—Origin of the Bamboukains—Their character and manners—Their religion and superstition—They have no Marabouhts, and on what occasion they expelled these priests—Their ignorance in the working of their gold mines—Fertility of this country—They have numerous flocks—On its temperature, industry, and political state—History of the establishment of the colony of Mandings, on the banks of the Colez-Rio-d'ro, and the river of Felema—The population.*

THE country of Bambouk is much more celebrated than known, and its golden mines have often been the source of splendid dreams; yet Bambouk must not, with the Eldorado of South America, be ranked in the class of mere chimeras; its mines of gold certainly exist, they have been worked though imperfectly, and have produced much gold; and if it be rational not to adopt enthusiastically any proposed projects for the purpose of exploring these mines, of conquering them, or securing

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to ourselves the working and possession of them, yet it is also rational, not to treat them with too much indifference, for we might, with some hopes of success attempt to obtain possession of the greater part of the gold, which this rich country produces; and by instructing the natives in the art of discovering and working mines, we might even obtain that which yet remains hidden in the obscure recesses of the mountains of Tabaoura.

It is from the country of Bambouk, that part of the gold is procured which is disposed of on the western coast of Africa, from the mouth of the Senegal, to Cape Palmas; all that also, which the caravans convey from Thombouctou to Morocco, Fez, and Algiers, as well as the gold which proceeds by Sennaar to Cairo and Alexandria, and lastly, the prodigious quantity of this metal, which is employed in the gold-rings, bracelets, plates, and other ornaments, used by the negresses and the rich Mulatto women, both to decorate their own persons and those of their favorite young slaves, is procured almost entirely from the gold mines of Bambouk; and this custom of manufacturing gold trinkets, &c. prevails in all the countries of northern Africa, comprised between the twelfth and twentieth degrees of North latitude, and between the first and twentieth longitudinal degree East of the island of Ferro.

There are therefore, strong reasons for believing that these countries contain some very rich treasures. They have yet been explored only on the surface, but gold presents itself every where either in the form of sand, in spangles, in grains, in particles, in ferruginous py-



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rites or in pieces of emery; in all of which it is more or less combined.

However frequent ablutions the earth of this country may experience, still there always adheres to it little particles of gold; in fact this metal manifests itself so constantly and so profusely in all the different parts of this country, and above all in the vallies formed by the mountains of Tabaoura, which occupy a very considerable extent, that it is almost indubitable, that the source of these partial effusions, must be in the masses of gold contained in heaps, or veins, in secret caverns of these mountains.

During my residence in Africa, I endeavoured to collect a variety of notes on the country of Bambouk. A part of these I had from the negroes and moors of the Senegal and the Gambia, who had visited this rich country; others I procured from the English established in the Gambia, whom I frequently saw at Gilfrey, and who gave me some very important and numerous details on this part of Africa; I also found some information on Bambouk, in a work printed in England in 1782.

A variety of memoirs were likewise communicated to me by Messrs. Levens, David, Pelays, and Legrand, the two former of whom were directors of, and the two latter employed in a civil capacity, under the ancient India company; they had visited the country ot Bambouk during the years of 1730, 1731, 1732, and 1744.

The following information may be considered as the result of these researches, memoirs, and *notitia*, and may perhaps spread some light on a very interesting

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country which is little frequented by Europeans, and on the gold mines which it contains.

The country of Bambouk, to the South of the Senegal, and ten leagues distant from its left bank, is contained between the 14° 15′ and the 12° 30′ of North latitude; this geographical situation is rather different from that laid down in the map of D'Anville, but I have adopted it from the notes furnished to me by the English of the Gambia, who found it to agree exactly with the map of Major Rennell; the longitude of this country is between the 7° 10′ and the 8° 30′ East of the island of Ferro: The river Felema which joins the Senegal at Tafalisga, forms the western limits of this country.

It appears from the observations which I have collected, that the real extent of the country of Bambouk, is not more than thirty-six leagues from North to South, by a medial breadth of twenty-eight, which gives a superficies of a little more than one thousand square leagues.

This territory is divided into three kingdoms or countries independent of each other; these are Bambouk, Satadou, and Konkoudou. Every one has its peculiar king or chief; but that of these three kingdoms, which bears particularly the name of Bambouk, concedes to its king a certain superiority, which is however only honorary; he derives his rank from the importance of the country of Bambouk, from the rich gold mine of Natakon which is therein situated, and from the ancient prerogative of his throne. From hence it is that the kingdom of Bambouk has given its



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name to the whole country, and that the Satadou and Konkoudou, though independent, are all denoted under the same general name.

The kingdom of Bambouk is situated in a direction from South-east to North-east, on the two shores of the great Colez or Rio-D'Oro; Satadou is situated to the South-west, and Konkoudou to the South-east: each of these three kingdoms possess gold mines, but those of Bambouk are the richest, the most celebrated, and numerous, and the best known.

The mountains of Tabaoura which form a chain, from thirty eight to forty leagues in extent, occupies a considerable portion of this country; they produce many springs, and two principal rivers have their source here, both of which are denominated Colez.

One of these rivers irrigates the western part of Bambouk and the other the eastern; the West Colez, which is also called Rio-D'Oro from the Portuguese, has a course of near thirty direct leagues, and joins the river of Felema at the village of Nayè-Mow; the East Colez which is called Guyamon-Colez, enters the Senegal at Bakayakoulou.

The inhabitants of Bambouk are of Manding origin. A colony of these people so well known in all western Africa, conquered this rich country at a very remote period, and previous to the modern discovery of Africa by the Portuguese.

The natural activity of the Manding nation, their intelligence, their industry, and their language, have all been equally corrupted by the Mandings of Bambouk; these last are cowardly and indolent, improvi-



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dent and rash, ignorant and superstitious; their language is a confused mixture of the Manding, the Iolof, the Foulhas, and Moorish dialects; it is a gross jargon, in which we are surprised to meet sometimes Portuguese words. The negroes of this part of Africa consider it as a kind of gibberish, difficult to understand, and in which the Manding language is hardly to be perceived.

The negroes of Bambouk are infamous cowards; yet they are perpetually at war with a neighbouring black nation, called Kassons, who live on the borders of the Senegal above the cataract of the rock Felow. These savages arrive unexpectedly among them, burn their villages, pillage their cattle, and carry away their women and children: few years pass without one or other of these invasions or indignities taking place It might be supposed that the Bamboukains, who are capable of bringing ten thousand men into the field, would resent with asperity these attacks and injuries committed by their audacious and savage neighbours; but such is their pusillanimity, that they have merely adopted weak and feeble measures against these reiterated insults. They have indeed, within a very short time, taken the precaution of watching the motions of the Kaffons, and of preventing in some measure the inconveniences resulting from their audacity, by retreating, at the time of their invasion, with their cattle, their gold, their most valuable effects, and their families into the heights of the mountains of Tabaqura, the acclivities of which are very difficult and dangerous to those who are unacquainted with the country.



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The Kassons, who in these incursions seldom amount to more than seven or eight hundred men, dare not engage them here; they therefore confine themselves to committing ravages, and destroying such moveables as could not be saved, or carrying off women and children, who in the surprize were unable to escape.

Thus do the degenerate Mandings of Bambouk suffer themselves to be oppressed by a band of bold and savage negroes, who powerful from their temerity, but still more from the cowardice of the Bamboukains, render themselves formidable to a people, who might easily destroy them, were it not that the influence of gold, and the debilitating luxury of indolence, have corrupted their character, and enervated their courage.

These negroes, established as they are in a rich and fertile country, give themselves up to unlimited indolence and inactivity; as their lands produce, in a manner of speaking, without culture, every thing which is necessary to an easy and agreeable life, and more particularly as they procure, almost without labour, that corruptive metal called gold; they have no emulation either for agriculture, the most valuable and first of arts, nor for industry or commerce.

In every village of Bambouk, there is a place of assemblage, which is called the Bentaba: this is a spacious area, formed by stakes placed in the ground at ten or twelve feet distant from each other; they are fifteen feet in height, and covered with a thatched roof. The size of the Bentaba is always such, that all the males in the village, from twelve years old, may assemble there at once.

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It is here that the councils are held, all the public affairs are transacted, and the chiefs and ancients hear complaints and award justice. In this place also, from the rising of the sun, may be seen clubs of negroes, who pass whole days there in smoking, playing, and above all in hearing and telling stories and histories; for the most absurd and lying narrations form their sovereign pleasure, and the most exquisite amusement of these men, who become old, ere they are yet free from the imbecility of infancy.

After the sun is set, the women and young girls repair in their turn to the Bentaba, where the latter indulge immoderately in the pleasures of dancing. This pleasure consists in moving with a kind of enthusiasm, and assuming at the same time the most irregular and indecent attitudes. All this passes in the midst of the tumultuous and vociferous acclamations of men and women, of the noise of drums, instruments, and the beating of hands, which mark the time.

The Maindings of Bambouk are polygamists, and take as many women as their fortune will enable them to support. This maintenance, in a country which affords in profusion gold, and all the necessary articles of life, does not require a very great expence; and hence the acquisition of a woman is there attended with a very trivial expence.

When a man wishes to marry a young girl, he first solicits her consent, and then demands her of her parents; but this last is however a matter of mere ceremony. When the lover and the female are both of a mind, he makes a present to her parents of a few

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pounds of salt, a little gold, and sometimes an ox or a sheep. The present which he makes to his future wife consists of two or four pieces of calico, a few pair of slippers or morocco sandals; some glass ornaments, amber, coral, cloves, some Dutch dollars, and one or two baskets of millet: for this price he may obtain even the daughter of a chief or king. Among the lower class of people, these presents are of course of inferior value.

When the presents have been accepted, the parents of the young girl conduct her to the house of her husband, accompanied by a numerous retinue of women, dancers, musicians, &c., who sing the virtue and beauty of the lady, and the strength, wealth, and generosity of the future husband.

When the young girl is arrived at the door of her betrothed spouse's house, she takes off her sandals, and they give her a little vessel, which is full of water; she knocks at the door; it is opened, and she finds her future husband surrounded by the elders of his family; she approaches towards him, prostrates herself, and empties on his feet the water contained in the vessel; she then wipes them dry with the bottom of her drapery.

This act of submission is the only ceremony which is performed in their marriages.

After this, the husband installs his new wife in a cottage on his enclosure, which is constructed and prepared expressly for her, and where she finds every thing that will be necessary for conducting her peculiar avocations.

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It is the same in Bambouk as in every other country of western Africa which I have visited. The first woman which a black marries, is peculiarly his wife, and always preserve a certain degree of superiority over those whom he may hereafter marry. This first wife lives in the same house, and eats with him, though never at the same table; she takes care of his sandals when he is at home, and she is consulted and heard upon every occasion.

The other women, who are associated with this first, though equally legitimate, are nevertheless obliged to observe a certain deference towards her; they cannot enter the house of their master unless they are called, and they must take off their sandals at the door; they are, in fact, a kind of legitimate concubine, whom the husband frequents in rotation, and remains with each a week; she therefore, who is the temporary wife, is bound to prepare the food for her master; she causes it to be conveyed to him, or perhaps carries it herself, if she be protected by the principal wife.

Each woman enjoys exclusively her own property, and the most laborious is therefore the most rich. Such as are best experienced, and the most active in washing the gold, possesses the greatest quantity of this metal; the richest however are not allowed to indulge in luxury any more than those who have it not, for it is forbidden by the husband; they cannot make use of their property in any other way than to render their cabin more commodious and agreeable, to make their children more comfortable, and to regale their husbands and his friends with better fare.

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As the first wife possesses great influence, the concubines are of course interested in watching her temper, and they emulate each other in endeavouring to secure her friendship by presents, in which they also render their own situations more agreeable.

The Bamboukains are voluptuous, but not jealous; their wives and daughters are very gallant, and easily grant their favours to those who solicit them. No shame attaches even to the prostitution of an unmarried woman; but the public adultery of a wife sheds a degree of ignominy on the husband.

When an adulterous intercourse has become known, the husband is in some measure degraded, unless he avenges it, and this revenge is not cruel; the insulted husband repudiates his wife, but retains the children. He makes his complaint at the Bentaba before the chief and elders of the village; they condemn the seducer to pay the husband an ox, or a certain quantity of gold, and at the same time they permit him to plunder his wife's gallant during the space of one month.

This is the only punishment for adultery: a crime which does not here stain with infamy the woman who is found, and adjudged guilty of it. She is expelled and repudiated, but she retains all the property which she may have possessed, and she often marries her seducer, or some other husband more complaisant than her first one.

So much moderation in the punishment of an insult, which generally irritates the pride of man, proves at once that the Bamboukains are debauched, and that their manners are dissolute; and it may also be seen,

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that their wives are not only very gallant and libidinous, but discontented with the mild and obliging character of their husbands; they sometimes love, like another Messalina, to insult benevolence, and to publish their infamous debauchery.

It has now been seen that the Bamboukains have their vices; but let it be remembered that they are not altogether destitute of virtue. One of the principles of their morality is, to do unto others as they would be done by; they never plunder or rob among themselves, they never make slaves; nor has it ever been known, that a Bamboukain has become the captive of his countrymen, and been sold by him.

They mutually assist each other, and keep their promise inviolable; they practice hospitality with the utmost pleasure and alacrity, and indeed they possess this virtue in an eminent degree; it is particularly towards the blacks, with a preference for mahometan negroes, that they exercise it with zeal; they do not like the whites, but fear and mistrust them; and hence their conduct towards them is very different from that which they shew towards the negroes.

In the whole country of Bambouk, a black will never be found to want necessaries; if he arrives naked and destitute among those hospitable people, the men, the women, and indeed every one, in an instant procures him clothing. A strange negro enters into the first house he meets with in his road, and salutes the master; if it be the hour of repast, he is placed at his side, and eats in the same bowl; every one treats him with cordiality; and when the meal is finished, the

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stranger rises, and addresses the host with a sentence to the following effect:—"I thank thee, brother, may Mahomet bless thee, and may God prosper thee."—With these words a strange black may travel through the whole of Bambouk, without wanting any thing, and meeting every where with a favourable reception.

From these principal traits of the character and manners of the Bamboukains, we may conclude that, though the gold which as it were lays at their feet; though the fertility of their land, and the heat of the climate which they inhabit, may have corrupted and enervated them, they are nevertheless rather effeminate than wicked men, and the conquest and subjection of such a people would be a very easy enterprize.

The Manding nation are Mahometans, a religion which is also adopted by the Bamboukains; but this devotion is reduced by them, simply to pronouncing certain words from the Koran, occasionally during the day, and in performing the ablutions enjoined by the Islamite law.

They practice the ceremony of circumcision, which is performed both on the males and females, and it is considered as an indispensable operation. Young people of either sex are not allowed to marry until after this has taken place; and it would be considered as the greatest crime, in this country, to taste the pleasures of love before having undergone it. Such a sin would be an abomination, and it is held in such horror by the inhabitants, that they very rarely commit it.

They administer this kind of baptism when they are between the age of twelve and fourteen; the Bambou-

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kains doubtless imagined that performing this ceremony at such an advanced period, would prevent the too early intercourse between the sexes.

They arrive at puberty in the tenth year of their age, but this delay is the source of other inconveniences; in a country which is unhealthy, and where the heat is oppressive, the operation being performed thus late, becomes very delicate and often dangerous; hence it is confided only to the elders of the village, who are expert and able practitioners.

This ceremony is the most solemn and grand of any which takes place among the Bamboukains; it is announced two months before hand; the youth of both sexes are prepared for it by seclusion, and by a peculiar regimen, and they are strictly watched.

On the day of the ceremony all the village is ornamented with flowers and boughs, and the air rings with songs of joy; the ceremony is performed in the Bantaba, where the chief of the village, assisted by the elders, places himself upon an elevated platform; all men who have been circumcised, may be present at it; but the women are excluded.

The young girls and boys who are about to be circumcised, are crowned with flowers, and are led in procession, walking two by two, the boys first and the girls last. Every thing is conducted with the greatest solemnity; the ceremony begins with the boys, and is then performed on the girls; the cries and screams which are uttered by these victims, are drowned by the barbarous noise of their singers and musicians.



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As the platform upon which the chiefs and elders are placed, is very elevated, the operation can be seen only by them, and the secret which they exclusively possess, stops the violent hæmorrhage and prevents the consequences which might take place from the wounds which they inflict.

It would be too tedious to detail at full length, the whole of this ceremony, which is attended by many singular particularities, and which could not be here made known, without an offence to decency.

We must however take some notice of the privileges which are acceded by circumcision; this operation and ceremony, seems to give them entire emancipation, the possession of all natural rights, and a perfect liberty to indulge in the pleasures of love without any remorse, without any shame, and without being blamed for it.

A very anciently established custom, concedes to those who have been recently circumcised, the right of secluding themselves from the eye of their parents for forty days. From the rising of the sun to the setting a young boy or a girl after circumcision, may quit their paternal house for a whole day; during the time that the sun is in the horizon, they go wherever their fancy leads them, and remain wandering about in the country, and different places contigious to their villages.

They may demand their food wherever they please, but they are not allowed to enter a house without being invited; they remain at the door, and if it so happens that they are not requested to come in, custom

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obliges those who inhabit the house to carry them out various kinds of meat, always carefully dressed: between the repasts they are at liberty to go out of the village, and to sport in the fields and woods with which it may he surrounded.

Though the ceremony of circumcision takes place in the midst of winter, yet as in this country, the heat is always very oppressive, so great a liberty as is afterwards given to the newly circumcised, would doubtless be attended with very serious consequences, were it not that to avert these dangers, the Bamboukains have forbidden any kind of intercourse taking place between the girls and boys, not even with any person in the village, except their parents; and in order to enforce this decree, some negroes who are considered as sorcerers, and as the agents of Mamma Jamboh, a kind of demon invented by the Mandings, rub their bodies with clay, tie their loins with leaves or straw, cover their faces with frightful masks, and arm themselves with many corded whips, and in this manner scour the country and villages to watch the motions of these juvenile circumcised.

These agents of a necessary police, make the most dreadful howlings; and if they meet any of these young girls and boys together, or in any suspicious situation, they flog them till the blood runs down; in fact the dread which these deputies of Mamma Jamboh, inspires, effectually keeps them from meeting each other, and thus prevents connections which might prove fatal.

During these forty days of liberty, those who un-



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dertake to enforce this severe police, and who cannot do it but by the authority of the chiefs, and with the consent of the parents belonging to the *nouveaux circoncis*, receive numerous presents, and are in particular well fed and regaled.

This period of independence is closed by a general fête, in which all the village participates; they kill a number of oxen, which are eaten by the guests, and all kinds of meat and intoxicating liquors are lavished in abundance; the entertainment then concludes with a dance.

A very singular circumstance, which distinguishes the Mandings of Bambouk from their original stamina, is, that they have no Marabouhts or priests, and that they will not suffer them to exist in their country. They however had these priests at the time of conquering the country, but they conspired against the chiefs of the nation; they wished to possess themselves of the sovereign authority, to subjugate the Bamboukains, and to render themselves masters of the gold mines.

This conspiracy was discovered, and all the Marabouhts were put to death; from this period, these priests were not only expelled from Bambouk, but they would not suffer a Mahometan priest to enter the territory. The country, perhaps, became more tranquil from this circumstance, but the progress of knowledge certainly suffered from it, and from this event, which is now more than three hundred years ago, the Bamboukains have become the only branch of the Mandings, which betray such gross ignorance, such absurd and ridiculous superstitions, such indifference for reli-

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gion, and such apathy and stupidity; an apathy and stupidity which renders them incapable of reaping any benefit from the fertility of the countries which they inhabit.

It will hereafter be seen, that the only way in which these negroes work their mines, is by excavating pits, from whence they extract an earth mixed with gold, which they disengage by washing it; these pits are often dug very carelessly, whence it sometimes happens, that they fall in and overwhelm the miners who are working there. It would, however, be easy to save these unhappy victims of ignorance, as these excavations are never more than forty feet deep; but the negroes, instead of attributing these accidents to their own ignorance, have the abominable stupidity to suppose, that they were produced by the devil, who they imagine to be the sovereign and manufacturer of gold, and who occasions these accidents in order to procure slaves for himself.

The Bamboukains suppose, that the devil fabricates gold at an immense depth in subterraneous caverns; that he causes this rich metal to be worked by slaves; that the number of these slaves employed in this manufactory is very great; that a certain quantity of them perish every year; and that the falling in of the pits is only a trick of the devil's, who wants to get some new slaves to replace those he has lost. Impressed with this opinion, they are afraid to help the unhappy sufferers; they would displease the devil if they were to try to save them, and thus deprive him of his slaves, besides running the risk that his highness would carry



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the gold out of the country, and establish his workshop in some other place.

This prejudice, which is firmly engrafted in the weak and stupid minds of the blacks, added to their ignorance of the method of working mines, occasions the loss of many men every year, whose lives it would be easy to save, and much easier to prevent from the danger which they run.

It has, however, sometimes happened, that new pits have been dug on the ruins of former ones, which were fallen in, and which were covered with grass and herbs from lapse of time; here they have found the skeletons of the unhappy wretches who had been crushed to death. This, it may be supposed, might have convinced the negroes that the devil did not carry them off to his subterraneous caverns, as was supposed for the purpose of working gold; but their superstition explains this in a very different manner. Without doubt, say they, the devil found some very considerable defect in the slave whomhe wished to take; perhaps he was not strong enough, or he might have had some secret infirmity, or he might have been too old; but, in fact, which ever way it was, the devil had his own reasons for not taking away the slave instead of leaving him to perish.

The ignorance, the indifference, and the fatalism of these stupid men, is such, that the slave trade thus carried on by the devil amounts every year, in the four principal mines, to ten or twelve victims.

When these accidents happen, the family of the deceased makes an offering of a black cow, or some other

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cattle, according to their circumstances, to his highness. The reason of this sacrifice is, that the negro, whom the devil thought proper to carry off, may obtain, in some of the subterraneous departments, a comfortable and lucrative situation. They in general imagine, that the devil keeps a very good table, and gives his slaves plenty of food, and that when they can obtain some confidential place from him, they live in high style, and their situation is in every respect enviable.

If in the country of Bambouk there are sometimes arid, dry, and steril spots, they are to be found only towards the summits of the mountains of Tabaoura, for the low lands of this country are irrigated by such a number of rivers, rivulets, and brooks, which generally furnish them with pure and wholesome water the whole year, and which overflow during the rainy season, that this country, being always preserved in a humid state, is in general productive and fertile, and covered with a rich and noble vegetation.

We sometimes meet whole plains of that kind of cow-grass (*gramen*), which is known under the name of Guinea Grass (*herbe de Guinée*), which grows naturally and without any cultivation to the height of six or seven feet; it may hence be conceived how productive these fields would be, if the Bamboukains knew how to cultivate them carefully, and if they were acquainted with the art of agriculture. But they leave them in a state of nature, and use them only as pasturage for their cattle.

The baobab, the benteniers, the calabashes, every species of palm trees, and many sorts of acacias; other

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thorny trees, which preserve their foliage all the year, the one of which produces fruits which are extremely acid, but which are eaten with pleasure by the natives; wild vines and shrubs, loaded with the finest flowers, all grow and prosper naturally in the country of Bambouk.

Honey abounds in every part, and is of a very mild and luscious quality. It is celebrated even as far as the island St. Louis and the mouth of the Gambia, and is considered as excellent. This alone proves, that Bambouk produces many of those trees and plants, the flowers of which abound in mild and sweet juices, from which the bees extract their honey.

A great many of these trees are covered with hives which these insects in a wild state have constructed and firmly fastened to the branches of their favorite trees; but those on which we are always certain of finding them, are the calabashes and the tamarind trees.

The Bamboukains make with this honey a fermented liquor, of a very intoxicating nature, and which they drink with great zest; in order to procure it, they let some millet ferment in an earthen jar, full of water; when the fermentation is at its height, they empty it into a certain quantity of honey, which is proportioned to the size of the jar; it is then exposed to the sun for ten hours, at the end of which time they decant this liquor, by causing it to filtrate through a very ingenious apparatus constructed with leaves, after which they drink it. This beverage is agreeable, strong, caustic, and inebriating.

It appears also, that the country of Bambouk is fa-

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vorable for the cultivation of leguminous plants; they produce many species of peas, and among others the pistachio kind, which, when a little parched, has the taste of filberts. There are also many kinds of beans, but above all, that large white species which is enclosed in husks three and four feet long, and two inches and a half broad; these enormous beans are very delicate, and constitute an extremely wholesome food. I have eaten them both at the Senegal and Albreda.

All these leguminous plants grow, as it were, without culture; if a field be sown once with them, they will afterwards produce six harvests, without any labour. This country also furnishes abundance of maize, two sorts of millet, yucca root (*manioc*), potatoes, and a number of fine water mellons.

Hence, the inhabitants of this fertile country need never be destitute of subsistence; they are sometimes liable to very dry and unproductive seasons; and as they have no agricultural pursuits, are improvident and idle, and neglect, during years of abundance, to store magazines with the produce of their harvests, which would secure them against less fecund seasons, they would often be reduced to the most dreadful extremities, were it not that the gold which they possess, enables them to procure, at a very great price, those provisions, which their own imbecility and indolence deprives them of.

It has been seen, that the Guinea grass grows abundantly in the country of Bambouk, and that it flourishes without any culture; it is owing to the natural abundance of this grass, that there are such numerous

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flocks of oxen and cows, which they rear and keep inclosed in the open air, for they never confine their cattle in stables.

All the animals belonging to the village are put into the same common inclosure, made by joining large stakes transversely; this inclosure is near the village, and surrounded with fields of Guinea grass; the flock is thus sheltered from the incursions of beasts of prey, which, however, are not frequent in this country; these kinds of parks are watched by persons, whom the inhabitants of the village pay for this purpose.

The cattle are nourished with fodder, and each family tends its own oxen and cows, with the most scrupulous attention, and even with a degree of superstition; for the negroes imagine, that if they neglect any of their beasts, this negligence would be productive of ill consequences, and that the others would pine away from chagrin; hence the care of these flocks is the only thing to which they deliver themselves with zeal and attention, and even the women sometimes perform this office.

They milk them twice a day; one part of which is employed in making sanghlet, a favourite dish of theirs; it is millet dust slightly prepared over the steam of water, and afterwards diluted with milk, which is then suffered to become a little acidulated; it is abundant in cream. All the negresses and mulatto women of the countries, with which I have been acquainted, are extremely fond of this repast.

The other portion of the milk is employed in making excellent butter, which they churn in the morning before

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sun-rise, and which is always used in the course of the day, either in seasoning their food, and particularly in dressing rice, or in unctions; for the blacks love to anoint their bodies and hair with fresh butter; and among the Bamboukains it is actually a high degree of luxury to be well greased from head to foot with it.

It must not, however, be supposed, that the custom of greasing the body, which is so general in Africa, and in almost all the countries between the tropics, is only a singularity of manners, for these unctions are in fact required by nature.

Experience, doubtless, has instructed the nations of the torrid climates, that the custom of anointing all the body and the hair, lessens the inconvenience of a perpetual and too abundant perspiration, which necessarily tends to weaken the nervous system, as well as to impoverish the blood. The blacks of Bambouk, who are two hundred leagues from the sea, and where its breezes can never penetrate, who inhabit the burning regions in the interior of the country, and are inclosed by a circle of mountains, whose summits are partly naked rocks, are naturally much addicted to this custom of lubrifaction, which the ardent heat of their climate renders particularly necessary; but if by this means they contrive to retain their strength and health, they at the same time have the inconvenience of being extremely offensive in their smell.

It is well known that the temperature of Bambouk is the hottest on the globe during the whole year, and that the air is very unhealthy; it rains for four months, and yet barely do these rains refreshen the air, but on

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the contrary during their fall, it is in the highest degree humid and oppressive.

At this period all the rivers and rivulets overflow their banks, and after the rains have ceased, the low lands remain for a long time covered with water; the inhabitants know how to avail themselves of these inundations, for they cultivate rice, which is of a very good quality, and which sometimes grows to eight feet height.

It is the stalks of rice which they use for thatching their houses, and they also make mats of them, which are eight feet broad by thirty long; the convoys from Galum procured them at the island St. Louis; the stalks were very fine and elastic, and were painted in different colours, so as to form pictures in the Arabian manner; the texture of these mats is extremely curious. I had many of them, which I brought with me to France, and even to Paris, where they were offered and accepted as tokens of friendship.

The chain of mountains, called those of Tabaoura, extends along a part of Bambouk, crosses it in an angular direction, and forms two branches, which presents an obtuse angle at the southern extremity of the country. It is in the interior of this angle, where the source of the Colez-Rio-D'oro takes its rise, elevated near a hundred toises above the level country; and very approximate to this, is situated the rich mine of Natakom.

The interior of these mountains, thus sheltered from every wind, except that which comes from the desart of Zaara, is insupportably hot, and hence perhaps arises

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the principal obstacle to any fixed establishments which the Europeans might attempt to form in the country of Bambouk, which is so valuable from the gold mines which it contains, and so abundant in every thing which can render life agreeable and convenient.

The reader is already pretty well convinced, that the industry of the Bamboukains extends to a very few objects; literally speaking, they know only two trades; namely, that of a blacksmith or farrier, and a currier.

The blacksmith with a very simple apparatus, composed merely of a small anvil, two hammers, a chafing dish, and a pair of bellows, manufactures all the iron used in warlike instruments; he makes chains, rings, pikes, hatchets, nails, lances or sagayes, knives constructed in the form and size of poignards, sabres, horse-bits, stirrups, bracelets, gold rings, and ear-rings; they also make ornaments in fillagre, of a very delicate and ingenious appearance. These workmen are gifted with a degree of patience and skill, which enables them to execute with the same instruments, articles in iron of the largest dimensions, as well as others in gold of the most elegant construction.

The currier prepares the leather in corrupted brine, which is coloured either red, brown, black, or yellow, by means of certain grains, the produce of the country; they make the skins so tenuous, that they become as pliable as paper; they polish them in a very perfect manner, and make sandals, bonnets, boots, and ornamented cases for containing their grisgris and other cinctures.



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The only instrument which they use is a very large knife, which however serves them for rough cutting the leather, for carving it, for constructing very light ornaments, and at the same time for dividing a stalk of rice, of ten feet long, into twelve slips, with which the women manufacture those beautiful Bamboukain mats already spoken of.

All the inhabitants of this country are potters; they fabricate very handsome jars, vases of all kinds, and various formed pipes of an elegant construction; and as all the argillaceous earths in the vicinity of the mines, and beds of the rivers and rivulets, are greatly impregnated with gold, their manufactures in clay always glisten with spangles of this metal.

The women make with uncommon neatness several articles of clothing, as well as baskets, and mats of rice stalks dyed different colours.

Such are nearly the whole of the objects on which the industry of the Bamboukains exerts itself. With regard to their gold mines, it will be seen in a future chapter, in what manner they conduct this labour.

It cannot be supposed that the commerce of the Bamboukains, who are equally ignorant and lazy, who possess but little energy of character, and still less industry, can have any thing more important than gold; they, however, dispose of a considerable quantity of cattle, together with wax and the raw hides of oxen, goats, and kids.

Before the irruptions of the Kassons were so frequent, the Bamboukains carried their cattle and gold to Galam, and the river of Gambia; but since the epoch,



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when these savages began to plunder and despoil them, the timid Bamboukains have no longer dared to quit their country; they are apprehensive lest, during their absence, their country should be invaded, or they themselves attacked, robbed, and destroyed during their journey.

Their women, however, in 1787, used to frequent Galam, and convey thither their wax, pottery, skins, and gold, but particularly leguminous plants; they were always escorted by a small number of men.

The inhabitants of Bondou, a country situated to the West of Bambouk, carry on a very advantageous commerce with the Bamboukains. The people of Bondou cultivate cotton and indigo. During the rainy season, they manufacture pieces of calico of two qualities; the first is composed of seven fillets, of three cubits and a half long (which is equal to about seventy-two inches) by six or seven inches broad, or nearly the third of a cubit.

The pieces are more than an ell in width, and extremely well manufactured; the extremities are often dyed red, yellow, or blue. They are somewhat thicker than stout calico, and the women of Bambouk procure, and use them for dresses, with which they cover themselves, from the pit of the stomach to the feet; they pay for a piece of the first quality a drachm and twelve grains of gold; that which is of an inferior texture is used by the men for clothing. These last are composed only of five fillets, about six or seven inches broad, and about three cubits long; they are coloured with deep blue, and sell for half a drachm and fifteen grains.



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The Bamboukains have no salt; but as they are not able to dispense with this article, either for themselves or their cattle, the people of Bondou, in concert with the Moors, furnish them with it in exchange for gold.

The Bamboukains always exchange this metal for pieces of guinea, calico, salt, and plates of worked silver, of which the Bambouk women are very fond: likewise for other ornaments in silver, amber, and strings of cornelian grains, in the form of olives; all these, and a variety of other things, are purchased with the gold of Bambouk.

It may be reckoned in general, that in these exchanges they gain, by the Bamboukains, near two hundred per cent.; but the people of Bambouk never exchange their gold for glass ornaments, tobacco, cloves, silks, or brandy: for these latter objects they only obtain provisions, and articles of subsistence, in a very great abundance; and for the glass trinkets in particular, of which the women are so passionately fond, they lavish provisions in the most unqualified manner.

It must not be forgotten, that the dimensions in width and length of the pieces manufactured in Bondou are either a certain number of cubits or fractions of them; and it is a singular fact, that the Egyptian cubit is the invariable measure adhered to in fabricating stuffs in this part of Africa, and indeed in all the northern countries of this continent.

It has been observed, that Bambouk forms three kingdoms, viz. that of Bambouk, which has for its capital the royal village of this name, and under which

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all the country is comprised; that of Satadou, and that of Konkoudou.

Siratick is the regal title of the prince who governs the kingdom of Bombouk, the same as it is in the country of the Foulhas-Peuls, in those of the Serrawallis and Kassons, and in the kingdom of Bondou. We therefore say the Siratick of Bambouk, instead of the King of Bambouk.

Among a people who know neither how to read or write, who live in the grossest ignorance, and who abandon themselves to superstition and indolence, even tradition is not preserved, or if it be, it is mingled with lies and absurdities; it is therefore impossible to say any thing with certainty, which is founded on the oral communications of the Bamboukains. But without pledging myself for their strict veracity, I shall merely communicate some of the principal circumstances, in which the natives and the Manding colonies established on the banks of the Gambia, are uniformly consistent.

Towards the end of the fifth century of the Hegira, or the year 1100 of the Christian æra, a Manding warrior, animated with the love of conquest, and zealous for the propagation of Islamism, quitted his country, attended by ten thousand warlike men, with a numerous retinue of Marabouhts and young women.

He ravaged all the countries situated on the right bank of the main course of the Gambia, marched towards Bambouk, whose gold mines were then known, massacred a part of the inhabitants, and compelled



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the other part to receive the Mahometan religion, subjected the whole country to his authority, and declared himself sovereign.

The name of this conquering apostle was Abba-Manko, who reigned despotically for thirty years. He left three sons, between whom, previous to his death, he divided his kingdoms; the eldest was put in possession of Bambouk, and the rich mines of Natakon and Semayla; to the second was given the country of Satadou; and to the third that of Konkoudou. He also ordained, that the eldest son should be the supreme chief of the three kingdoms, which superiority was likewise supported by the possession of the richest mines.

This sovereign authority, though doubtless weakened by the lapse of time, yet continues in some degree; and as I have already said, the king of Bambouk is the highest in rank of the three monarchs; and though the male posterity of Abba-Manko may have been many ages extinct, yet the Siraticks of Satadou and Konkoudou acknowledge the king of Bambouk as chief, and in every circumstance of difficulty, and on all occasions where the general interest of the country is at issue, the other princes, with the nobles of their respective kingdoms, always assemble at the residence of the Siratick of Bambouk: and even at present, this monarch presides in their kind of States-General, where the principal affairs of the country are discussed, and where their resolves on any subject are finally ratified.

The second remarkable cirsumstance among the Bamboukains is the invasion of the Portuguese. This,

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according to their mode of calculation, took place about the ninth century of the Hegira.

They say that the Portuguese rendered themselves masters of all the countries of Bambouk and its gold mines; that they massacred many of their princes, and a great number of inhabitants; that they afterwards quarrelled among themselves, and destroyed each other; that many of them perished from debauchery and disease; and that being reduced to a very few, the Bamboukains conspired against them, and massacred all of them in one day.

These events are often related by the Mandings of Bambouk; and every person who has frequented them assures us, that they entertain the most invincible hatred for the Portuguese. They know that this nation exists, and they dread its return into their country, for they have reason to deprecate the massacres which they once inflicted. From this circumstance doubtless arises that terror which they feel at the whites of whatever nation they may be.

There are yet to be seen, in Bambouk, the ruins of ancient forts, as well as houses, which were built by the Portuguese; many words of the Portuguese language are also often found intermingled with the Bambouk dialect.

The third celebrated epoch in the history of Bambouk, is the conspiracy of the Marabouhts against the kings and princes of this country. It is well known that these Mahometan priests form a very particular class of people among all the black nations of Africa,

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who follow the Mahometan religion, and that they are crafty and intriguing.

The Manding Marabouhts are peculiarly strong minded. They are subtile, cunning, and artful; and have in general great influence over the negroes of Africa.

They were very numerous in the country of Bambouk; the riches of the gold mines tempted them, and they formed a party against the sovereign authority; they conspired the deaths of the kings and princes, but their machinations were discovered.

All the Marabouhts of Bambouk were seized and massacred in one night; part of their families experienced the same fate, and the rest were expelled the kingdom, and since this period they have never suffered any Marabouhts to exist among them. They do not even admit of one of these priests to enter the country; and if by means of deception, a Marabouht should chance to gain admittance, he is immediately put to death if discovered; so effectually have the kings and princes of this country inspired their people with mistrust and horror, for this intriguing and able class of men.

I am unable to give any authentic information relative to the period when the extinction of the posterity of Abba-Manko took place, nor do I know how the progenitors of the present race of princes possessed themselves of the thrones of Bambouk, Satadou, and Konkoudou, but it is well known, that they did not descend from the famous Manding conqueror, though

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they appear to have been long seated on the thrones which they fill. But it doubtless was at the period when these new dynasties took place, that despotism and royal authority fell into contempt, for it will be seen that these princes have now only a mere imaginary rank without any real power.

The kingdoms of Bambouk are rather species of republics than monarchies, the Siratick is the supreme chief, but his power is so limited that it is hardly known to exist: he constitutes the first rank; the second is composed of the chiefs, or masters of villages with the title of Farim; the Farims have much greater authority and power in the villages which they govern than the king has in the state.

The throne is hereditary as well as the dignity of Farim, which last, however, is so, under certain conditions. If a king die without leaving male issue, which is at an age to reign, the most ancient male branch of the royal family mounts the throne, or rather he is appointed to it by the Farims; from hence it results, that there is never any regency, and the dignity of Siratick is always vested in the hands of experienced men.

This custom also prevails with regard to the Farims, who, if their presumptive heirs be too young, are succeeded at their death by the eldest of their family.

The Farims were formerly nominated by the Siratick; but since the decay of the regal power, these magistrates have not only become independent of the Siratick, and cannot be deposed by his private power,

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but they pretend, that if united, they could even depose the king himself.

These chiefs, however, are in their turn dependent on the people who have more than once displaced a Farim, and elected another in his stead. It is necessary that the Siratick should sanction these depositions, and he seldom refuses.

If the king be discontented and he wishes to hazard an act of royal authority, he first secures the assent of the elders and principal persons of the village, the chief of which he wishes to depose; he must then induce them to prefer some complaint against him; this done, he convokes to a royal Bentaba, a certain number of the principal Farims, of whose support he is previously certain; of these he forms a council, before whom are cited all the elders of the village where he resides; he hears the complaints, displays the peculiar aggression, and pronounces, with the assent of his council, the deposition of the Farim, which immediately takes place without any opposition.

The king receives tributes from every village in his territory, which are appropriated to the purpose of supporting his own person, the expences of his family, and the dignity of his rank.

If a Siratick be just, wise, able, and more particularly if he be old, (for the Bamboukains have a great predilection, and unbounded veneration for age), the village tributes are then more considerable, more splendid, and more valuable; but on the contrary if he be neither loved nor respected, they suffer him merely to breath

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in kingly rank, treat him with indifference, and abridge the value of their tributes.

These kings or Siraticks cannot exact any thing from their subjects nor permit others to do it: like all the other inhabitants of Bambouk, they possess lands which they have cultivated for themselves; but these princes as well as all the branches of the royal family, consider working the mines as beneath their rank; and as they cannot compel their subjects to perform this duty for their own interest, it hence happens that they possess no other gold but what is given to them as tributes by the villages, for this metal forms a part of the annual tributes which are paid to them; but the quantity thus given, is never sufficient to render the kings very rich, so that many Farims in Bambouk possess much more gold than the king.

There cannot exist extensive power without a military force, and a military force cannot be maintained without funds; as the kings of Bambouk therefore possess no treasures, they are consequently without soldiers and without power, and are as little formidable abroad as they are at home.

The Farims on their part receive numerous presents from the inhabitants of the villages which they command, and in general they know pretty well how to render their places advantageous and important; those particularly who govern villages, approximate to the gold mines, become rich and powerful.

It may be seen that the form of government in this country is very simple and far from being complicated. The hierarchy of power may be reduced to the kings

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and his Farims, who in their authority, do not press upon the people, and the Bamboukains live under a constitution equally simple and free.

The decisive character of the government of this country, and in general of the political state of the Manding nation, and its colonies, is an unbounded liberty in the people, with a very limited and moderate power vested in their kings and chiefs. But notwithstanding this paucity of authority among the kings and princes of Bambouk, we may yet observe among the inhabitants, a great degree of submission and respect for those who govern them, when these last know how to respect themselves; when they know how to use their authority with prudence, moderation, and skill, and to render themselves beloved.

The more important affairs of the nation are, as has already been seen discussed in the royal Bentaba; while those of inferior consequence, are considered in the Bentabas of the Farims.

These last in the name of the inhabitants of the village which they govern, fix the price of gold at which it is to be sold to strangers; the Farim is even the agent for all the commerce of his village; it is he who makes the bargains; and the inhabitants are in general content with the merchandise which he gives them in return for their gold, cattle, and other commodities which are confided to his care.

In all the cantons, however, the prices are nearly the same, and a Farim would lose his credit if he were to trade for his people, at a lower price than a neighbouring Farim; hence the price of a village is the price of

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a whole nation; but it may easily be conceived that the Farims have an opportunity of enriching themselves by their situations; and that the foreigners who traffic in Bambouk and buy gold or any other articles of commerce, have an interest in gaining over these magistrates, who are the general agents for the whole country.

I cannot enter here into any more details relative to this country, which is so little known, but a knowledge of which would soon be spread all over Europe, if the factory and fort of Galam are re-established in the manner which they should be; and if the government becomes favourable to the commercial connections which might be contracted with this rich and fertile part of Africa.

I shall therefore close this account of its political state, with some notes which the English of the Gambia have given me, relative to its population.

It has been observed, that the country which is particularly known under the name of Bambouk, is near thirty-six leagues in extent from North to South, by a medial breadth of twenty-eight, thus presenting a superficies of more than one thousand square leagues. It has also been observed, that this country is irrigated by numerous rivers, rivulets, and arms of water, and that it is extremely fertile, notwithstanding it is partly covered with mountains, whose summits are rocky, arid, and dry.

But if we admit that these elevated and sterile regions form a third of the country, there will then remain six hundred and sixty seven square leagues, which may be



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ranked among the most fertile of countries, and which require very little labour to yield in astonishing profusion, every thing which can secure to the inhabitants an abundant subsistence.

The country of Bambouk ought therefore to be very populous, and it is said that its population does amount to, at least four hundred thousand inhabitants; but this estimation is much exaggerated, and it is supposed that Bambouk cannot furnish more than sixty thousand souls, or sixty individuals to each square league.

These indolent and voluptuous men, neglect and leave the most fertile lands uncultivated, in order to unite in villages approximate to the gold mines, and on the banks of springs and rivers which carry along mud and sands richly impregnated with gold.

Profound forests of several leagues in extent, remain appropriated merely to wild oxen and cows, which have proceeded from cattle escaped from the flocks, and which have propagated for a considerable time in these solitary retreats; and they sometimes speak of a race of black cows, which are very dangerous and formidable to hunters, who pursue them with fury, because they think that an offering of one of these cows is very acceptable to the devil, who is the master of the gold mines.

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## CHAP. XI.

### OF THE FOUR PRINCIPAL GOLD MINES OF BAMBOUK.

*The gold mines of Bambouk are a national property—The four principal mines, are denominated those of Natakon, of Semayla, of Nambia, and of Kombadyrie—Attempts of the India company to work the mines of Natakon and Semayla, in the years* 1730, 1731, *and* 1732—*Other parts of Bambouk, and many rivers of Bondou, also, furnish gold—M. David, governor of the Senegal, made a journey into Bambouk in* 1744—*Conduct and avarice of that governor—Result of his voyage—An ear-ring manufactured of the gold of Natakon; was examined and assayed at Paris in* 1788, *by M. Sage, professor of mineralogy, and found to be of the first quality.—Enterprizes which France might project, and attempt with regard to the country, and gold mines of Bambouk.*

THE gold mines of Bambouk are a national property, and over which the kings and Farims have no other personal authority, than that of watching over and protecting them. The inhabitants work those mines



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which are situated within their own territory, but at the same time the greatest advantages seem to attach more especially to those villages, which are in the vicinity of the mines. The more distant villages, share their wealth in a much smaller proportion; for they send a very few miners accompanied by women who perform the washing; these on their return give an account of their profits, and without doubt place it in the hands of the Farim to be divided among the families.

These distant villages are always situated on the banks of rivers and rivulets, which convey gold along with them, and they principally employ themselves in washing the sands and mud which form their beds; in this labour, which they attend unceasingly during the whole year, and particularly while the rainy season lasts, they find an ample indemnification for the small part which they have in the produce of the mines, which are principally worked by some extensive villages, formed in the vicinity of these masses of gold.

The working of the mines is carried on during the eight months of dry weather, and ceases when the rainy season commences. As all the gold is obtained by ablution, those blacks who best understand the method of washing it, consequently obtain the greatest quantity of gold.

The country of Bambouk is, strictly speaking, an auriferous earth; the natives are ignorant of the art of excavating mines, and in short the whole art of mining; they are satisfied with the gold presented to them on the surface of their soil, and know not how to seek it in the very entrails of the earth. All the gold which

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they either possess, or dispose of, is procured by washing the superior strata, of their land, or from the sands and mud which form the beds of their rivers and rivulets.

The Bamboukains do not yet know, nor have they ever sought for, the principal parts where the gold of their mines is situated; these places are totally unknown to the simple and thoughtless negroes, and it is highly probable that they do not reap more than one fifth of the profit, which they might possess from the gold situated in these rich countries.

There are four principal gold mines known in the country of Bambouk, viz. that of Bambouk or Natakon, that of Semayla, that of Nambia, and that of Kombadyrie. It appears also, that there are other masses of gold in this country, which however must be of secondary importance; perhaps they are merely auriferous pyrites. I shall here speak only of the four principal mines.

We are constantly surprised when we reflect, how long France has remained indifferent to the knowledge which she might have acquired relative to western Africa to the North of the line. We have possessed the Senegal more than a century; this stream receives near Galam, the river of Felema, which forms the western limits of the country of Bambouk, and yet notwithstanding these advantages, we possess very few certain facts relating to this curious and interesting country. How is it, that we have not endeavoured to procure more extensive information from the Portu-



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guese? They have been established in Bambouk, since the fifteenth century, and I have not a shadow of doubt, that the most numerous, and authentic documents respecting this rich country, and its gold mines, are to be found at Lisbon.

Nearly in the centre of a spherical angle, which the mountains of Tabaoura form to the South-east of Bambouk, is situated a village called Tabaoura; about two leagues to the South of this village, is the mountain of the same name, which is the highest in the country, and it is towards the foot of this elevation, that the Colez called by the Portuguese Rio-D'oro takes its rise.

The village of Tabaoura is situated on the left bank of the river, and about three leagues lower down on the same side, is the village of Natakon, the largest and richest of any village in the kingdom of Bambouk; at three quarters of a league, to the West of Natakon, is a small insulated mountain, the base of which is supposed to be three thousand paces in circumference, and its highest elevation not more than three hundred feet; the summit of this *monticule* * is spherical, and

* I have used this gallicism because I know no English word, which precisely expresses the idea, and a tedious verbosity may justly be obviated, by the naturalization of a useful term. I am equally zealous with any man for the purity of our language, but its elegance and conciseness, are superior considerations, and must sometimes be adhered to, even in violation of the former.—*Editor.*

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its declivities are very gentle; here are situated the gold mines of Natakon, which denomination it doubtless conferred on the village, for it is probable, that it was founded by those, who first worked this invaluable mine.

I have observed, that the mountains of Tabaoura form a spherical angle, above the village of the same name; the two branches of this mountain, diverge sufficiently from each other in this elevated part of Bambouk, so as to contain between them a small triangular plain watered by the Colez-Rio-D'oro, which runs through it in a winding direction; this plain progressively expands as far as a village called Koboko, where the mountains converge, and form a very narrow defile.

It has also been said, that the monticule of Natakon, is situated three quarters of a league to the West of the village; this monticule which spreads over the plain above mentioned, is totally detached, and half a league distant from the foot of the mountains which form the Tabaoura chain.

All the mountains contained in the little plain of Natakon are very elevated, and may be considered as the highest in the whole country of Bambouk; a spring of fresh water descends with a rapid force to the West of the monticule, irrigates three fourths of its base, and then enters the Colez-Rio-D'oro at the village of Natakon.

Such is the description of the situation of the richest gold mine in Bambouk, and it is literally conformable to the documents which have been furnished to me.



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The small plain of Natakon, which is near seven leagues in length, is irrigated by a great number of rivers of fresh-water, which descend from the circumambient mountains; the soil of this plain is rich and of a very deep colour. The Colez, and all the rivers which water it renders it extremely fertile, whence this valley produces various kinds of trees, millet, maize, rice, pistachio peas, beans, &c. &c. all of which are in great request among the negroes, who inhabit the countries contiguous to the main course of the Gambia.

All the little rivulets which descend from this part of the mountains of Tabaoura, convey with their waters portions of emery impregnated with gold; this circumstance authorises the supposition, that, that part of the mountains of Tabaoura in the vicinity of Natakon, may conceal in their interior some very rich gold mines.

The soil which constitutes the monticule of Natakon, is also of a very deep colour, rich, and very fertile; all the superior surface of this elevation, is covered with trees and bushes, and every where embellished with a thick grass; it is intermingled with very small grains of iron ore, and little spangles of gold; it contains also many pieces of emery impregnated with portions of the same metal.

The insulated nature of the monticule which forms the mine of Natakon, and the heterogenous state of the different mineral substances, which are there found commingled, induce us to suppose, that its formation took place at a very early period; and that, it is doubt-

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less the result of some physical catastrophe; perhaps it may have been a local deluge, which has detached from the elevated mountains of Tabaoura, the earth and substances, of which are formed the monticule, and which may hence be considered as an alluvion mine.

The whole surface of this small mountain is dug by the blacks, who perforate holes in the form of pits very near each other; these cavities are most numerous in the lower parts of the monticule, and all the surface of the inferior strata, is entirely covered with them. They are dug by a number of negroes in conjunction, who share among them the profits resulting from the labour.

In order to excavate one of these pits, it is necessary to obtain permission of the king and of the neighbouring Farims, who designate the places where these new cavities may be made; there are doubtless in this respect, (as in every other wherein a certain number of negroes of different families undertake to work these excavations,) some attendant police regulations; but of what nature they are, I am ignorant.

The ordinary depth of one of these pits, is from thirty to forty feet, while its diameter is not more than six; there are dug perpendicularly, without any precaution being taken, to sustain the earth which is, however in general, solid and tenacious.

These confident and thoughtless blacks perforate these cavities with a most stupid and ungrounded confidence; they do not reflect that earth of whatever nature it may be, is not always homogenous; that they may sometimes meet with parts less adhesive; and that

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the smallness of the diameter, and the lateral perpendicularity of their pits, render them highly dangerous, considering the depth which they give them; all these considerations never enter the minds of the negroes, and when it sometimes happens, that their thoughtless security is deceived by the falling in of their pits, which overwhelms the miners, they immediately think it is the work of the devil; it never occurs to them that these misfortunes are merely the effect of their own stupidity; and hence a repetition of them never produces an alteration in their mode of proceeding.

They know, however, that by means of pieces of wood placed transversely in their pits, and supported by slight planks, the earth will be prevented from falling in, and consequently their lives will be secure. This method has been imparted to them by foreigners who have visited the countries of Bambouk; but custom prevails, and they refuse to avail themselves of the knowledge.

It is impossible in my opinion, to conceive men who are greater fatalists than the Bamboukains; this circumstance has induced me to believe, that the imprudent method adopted by them in digging their mines, results at once from their fatalism and superstition; persuaded as they are, that the devil is the manufacturer and master of gold, that he confers a favour upon them by working it under their feet, and dividing this rich metal with them, that he is frequently in want of slaves for this purpose, and that he procures them in the manner above related, they adopted no precautions to prevent the falling in of their pits, because they

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would then oppose the will of the devil, who deprived of the slaves which he procures from among them, would be compelled to get them elsewhere, and establish his laboratory in another country.

These pits, which are not more than six feet in diameter, are dug at the first, six feet in depth; the earth which is thus removed, is carried away in a kind of basket in the form of seals, committed to the women, who carry it to the borders of the rivulet, which surrounds and waters the foot of the monticule; there it undergoes a thorough ablution; for the very first baskets of earth, are intermingled with gold dust and spangles.

The first six feet are excavated without any kind of embarrassment, because in general, the soil of the monticule is firm and tenacious; when they proceed lower down, they place in the pits, in order to remove the earth, two ladders made of bamboo, which are constructed very lightly though at the same time sufficiently solid; they are placed side by side, and are alternately used for descending and ascending, by the women who carry the baskets of earth to the rivulet, where other women are employed in washing it.

These ladders are five feet in height, and in proportion as the miner deepens the excavation, they continue to fasten on new ladders to the old ones, until they have dug forty feet deep. There is never more than two miners at a time in the bottom of a pit, one of which digs the earth, while the other fills the basket; in this labour, they alternately relieve each other. There are likewise no more than two women employed at a time, in conveying away the earth; so that the labour

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carried on here, is never impeded or embarrassed, though the size of the pits is always inconsiderable.

It has been observed, that each mine is worked by an association of a certain number of families; the miners are chosen from among the strong and healthy men, while the women, the young people, and the children are occupied in the washing, carrying to and fro, and other subordinate parts.

The two miners who work in the bottom of the pits, never remain there above two or three hours, at the expiration of which time, they are relieved by two others; the women likewise who are employed, are also succeeded after a short space, by other women; both the one and the other, are entirely naked, while employed in this labour.

When they have dug about four feet deep, they meet with a fat, argillacious earth, intermingled with small grains of iron ore, of loadstone, and emery, all of which are covered with little particles and spangles of gold.

The women divide the contents of a basket into small portions: they crumble the earth, break the lumps of iron or emery with hammers or pestles, and then placing the pounded substances in calabashes, half full of water, they stir and agitate them for a considerable time; when well diluted, they collect and take out with their fingers, the largest of the particles; the residium undergoes a number of washings, after which there remains at the bottom of the calabashes a very fine powder of emery, richly impregnated with gold, and in a state of pulverization. It is committed

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to the women to separate these substances, which is not however done till after a number of ablutions, and a very considerable degree of labour.

In proportion to the progressive depth of the mines, they meet with an increased quantity of emery and gold; they extract lumps of emery, and splinters of lapis lazuli, which are entirely covered with this rich metal. At the depth of twenty feet, they find the gold in round grains, or in small lumps of various forms, weighing from two to ten grains; in fact, the deeper they excavate, the more abundant is the gold, even to the depth of forty feet.

The English, to whom I am principally indebted for this information relative to the gold mines of Natakŏn and Semayla, have assured me, they have sometimes seen pieces of gold procured from these mines, which weighed 15 grains, and that to some lumps of emery the gold frequently adhered in portions of a still greater weight; they also informed me, that there are many specimens of the earth of these mines, which when dry, assumes a very deep brown colour, approaching to red, and in these specimens, spangles and small lumps of gold, were found in profusion; they at the same time observed, that a sack, containing ten pounds of earth from the monticule of Natakon, which had been procured by an Englishman, after having gone through all the necessary washings, still retained so many auriferous spangles, that the whole mass glowed with splendor.



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It is hence certain, that this monticule of Natakon, is a commixture of gold in small lumps, grains, and spangles, with a fat and argilaceous earth, a quantity of emery sand, grains of iron ore, and small portions of pulverized emery, which are always slightly impregnated with gold; that there is not a cubic foot of this monticule which is not loaded with gold; that it is probable, if an excavation were made beneath its base, this metal might be found in greater bulk, and abundance; and although it be difficult to assign any incontestible cause of the formation of this monticule, yet it cannot be doubted, that it was fortuitous, and the effect of some physical catastrophe or other.

This monticule, is only a sediment or collection of substances, thrown promiscuously together; and it is certain, that the gold which it so abundantly contains was not originally formed there, but was conveyed thither in all its perfection.

There is however much native gold found in this monticule; but this doubtless originated, in some other place, and only arrived at Natakon in consequence of some event of which I am ignorant, and which I shall not endeavour to explain.

When we also consider, that all the rivulets of the valley of Natakon, convey gold with their waters; that the sands and mud which form the beds of these rivulets, are also full of the same metal; that the soil composing the bed of the Colez-Rio-d'oro produces a very considerable quantity of gold; and that the whole plain of Natakon, presents spangles of it; it cannot be doubted, that the mountains surrounding

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this monticule, contain in their beds and caverns, the real gold mine, while the monticule of Natakon, is nothing more, than an emanation from the main body.

The true gold mine doubtless exists in the circumambient mountains, and since these receptacles have so profusely overflowed, they must themselves be very abundant, rich, and highly valuable.

In following the course of the Coles Rio-D'oro, and descending this river, we find, at the distance of about fourteen or fifteen leagues beyond the mine of Natakon, that of Semayla, which likewise belongs to the Siratick of Bambouk.

This last is situated at the foot of the western branch of the mountains of Tabaoura, on the left bank of the Colez-Rio-D'oro, five leagues to the West of that river, and the great village of Farbana. It has also probably occasioned the foundation of the village of Semayla, which is contiguous to it, and is intersected by a wide, but shallow rivulet, of fresh and clear water, which is never dry. The bed of this river, which is formed of red sand mixed with clay of the same colour, is full of emery impregnated with gold.

Between the village of Semayla and the mountain, is the mine, which is also in the form of a monticule, though not absolutely insulated like that of Natakon; its western part is joined to the mountain, and the northern parts of its base is washed by the river.

The circumstances are not here the same as at the mine of Natakon; the rivulet of Semayla descends into a valley very steep and rocky; it is a heap of large red



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rocks, mixed, it is said, with banks of marble of the same colour.

The monticule is not more than two hundred feet in height, but the diameter of its base is upwards of sixteen hundred; its circumference is hence more than five thousand feet; and the declivities of this monticule may therefore be conceived to be very easy.

Here the vegetation is not so rich and abundant as in the valley of Natakon; the country where the mine of Semayla is found, is dry; and the rocky mountains, at the foot of which it is situated, reflect so powerfully the rays of the sun, that for a part of the day it is totally insupportable; and even the inhabitants are so much affected by it, that during the months of May and June, those who are occupied in washing the soil, and still more those who are obliged to pound and pulverise the mineral substances, are compelled to suspend their labour, from ten o'clock in the morning till four in the afternoon.

The working of the mine of Semayla is conducted in the same manner as at Natakon, namely, by means of pits dug in the monticule; and the processes are similar to those already described, except that the labour is longer and more difficult, because the nature of the substances which contain the gold is different.

At Semayla, about two or three feet below the surface, is found a kind of reddish sand-stone, very hard to cut; it is mixed with a considerable quantity of calculous emery, and pieces of red marble extremely hard.

From this composition of the monticule of Semayla, it results that the miners proceed but slowly in their

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excavations, and that the substances procured from them before being submitted to ablution, must be pounded, and reduced to a state of pulverization, which is effected by large mortars and pestles, made of a very hard wood, which grows in the vicinity of the mines; but though this wood is nearly as hard as iron, the pestles and mortars do not long resist the refractory solidity of the marble: it is hence necessary frequently to renew them, and from the want of precaution on the part of the negroes, this circumstance occasions delay.

Farbana, Semayla, and many other villages in the vicinity, are principally concerned in working the mine of Semayla. Many families associate together for the purpose of digging a well and performing the other necessary operations: but as the trouble, apparatus, and expence are here far more considerable, these associations are more difficult, and the lower classes of negroes content themselves with exploring the soil of the bed of the rivulet of Semayla, from the monticule as far as Farbana. This labour, though less valuable than that of the mine, nevertheless procures a very considerable quantity of gold. The same regulations of police are adopted here as at Natakon.

At the depth of thirty or forty feet, the miners who dig the pits in the monticule of Semayla, meet with a solid stratum of red marble, which of course terminates their labours.

As they are absolutely ignorant of the art of mining, they have hitherto never imagined how this obstacle might be overcome; it may, however, be presumed, that it is at this depth where the real gold mine commences; for this marble, which is of a very lively red



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colour, and of a compact texture, is strongly impregnated with the auriferous ore.

It is because the mine of Semayla is much more difficult to work than that of Natakon, and because the time, trouble, and expences employed in working of it, are incomparably more considerable, that it is only considered as a secondary mine in the country of Bambouk, while perhaps it ought to be the first.

All the experiments that have been made on the pieces of red marble taken from this mine, prove that gold is mixt with it in a very great proportion. With respect to this fact, my English notes perfectly agree with the French documents which have been communicated to me, and which I am now about to mention.

The ancient India Company, which became so celebrated through the medium of Dupleix and Labourdonnaye, was in 1730 possessed in full sovereignty, of the course of the Senegal, and all the commerce carried on in the western countries of Africa, comprized between Cape Blanco of Barbary and the Cape of Sierra Leona.

M. Le Vens, governor and director-general of the Senegal, in the name of the Company, was at Paris in 1730, and informed the ministry of some projects relative to the country of Bambouk, where he had been, and at the same time formed connections.

Antecedent to this period, he had established a factory in the village of Nayhé-Mow, situated at the conflux of the Colez-Rio-d'oro and the river Felema; he was strongly impressed with the wealth of the gold mines of Bambouk, and conceived a plan of acquiring them by conquest. It appeared, however, that he was

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actuated by self-interest, and the hope of acquiring, for his own use, a large quantity of gold, rather than a wish to promote the public benefit, or the advantage of the company whose delegate he was. Hence he inspired distrust, and the ministry resolved, before they adopted the projects of M. Le Vens, to send to Galam and Bambouk a confidential person, whose object should be to visit the gold mines, make some experiments, and to assay them.

An artist named Pelays, a man well versed in mineralogy and metallurgy, was charged with this commission: he was to be accompanied by a man named Legrand.

On the 19th of April, 1730, Messrs. Pelays and Legrand entered into a mutual agreement with the India Company at Paris.

The mistrust with which M. Le Vens had inspired the administration, induced them to give M. Pelays very particular instructions, the object whereof was, to render an account of the conduct of the governor. This imprudence, and other indiscretions of M. Pelays, produced at Paris the separation between him and M. Le Vens, who returned to the Senegal. Hence it happened, that the mission of M. Pelays was not so well executed as it ought to be, or might have been. M. Le Vens threw obstacles in the way of M. Pelays, by refusing to furnish him with a number of articles which he required, and which were necessary; and this man, singular perhaps, but capable of rendering very useful and important services, only succeeded in arriving at Bambouk by dint of obstinacy, and was not able to remain there longer than two months.

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I have read of a misunderstanding between Messrs. Pelays and Le Vens . of the complaints of the former against the governor of the Senegal; of his residence in Bambouk, his journey to the mines of Natakon and Semayla, and the observations and experiments which he made on the auriferous matrix, and the gold itself, which were contained in a long memoir of forty folio pages, and from whence I have extracted a great part of my information relative to the two principal mines of Bambouk.

This Memoir is dated December 1730, and entitled, "*Account given by M. Pelays to the India Company, relative to his mission for the purpose of discovering the gold mines in the country of Bambouk.*" The count of Luserne, at that time minister of marine, who very kindly communicated this Memoir to me in 1788, had many other authentic documents on the same subject, from which I have taken with his permission, such extracts as appeared to me necessary to elucidate or improve my voyage in Africa.

From the experiments of M. Pelays, relative to the mines of Natakon and Semayla, it appears that eighty pounds of rough mixed earth, in the same state as it was drawn from a pit in the monticule of Natakon, at the depth of upwards of thirty feet, gave, after different ablutions, four ounces and three grains of purified earth, from which was extracted, by the usual process, sixty-seven grains and a half of gold; and that in the washing and refining of the eighty pounds of crude earth, there were obtained in grains of a considerable size, over and above the result of the experiment with the purified earth, about seventy-seven grains

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of gold; hence eighty pounds of crude earth, procured from the mine of Natakon, gave a produce of one hundred and forty-four grains and a half of gold.

M. Pelays was only enabled to make his experiments in the small way, on the red auriferous marble taken from the pits in the monticule of Semayla; but from these assays, he inferred, that ten pounds of crude matter from this mine, would give on an average as much gold as forty pounds of rough earth taken from the pits of Natakon.

But with the crude earth of the branch or rivulet of Semayla, he made more extensive experiments. The following is an account of his operations:

One pound of crude earth, from the rivulet of Semayla, was washed and reduced by levigation to two ounces and one drachm of purified earth, in which he clearly perceived a quantity of gold dust.

M. Pelays fused this earth with antimony by heat, and when the scoriæ was all consumed, there remained a small ingot of gold, weighing twenty-one grains and a half. This experiment having been made however with antimony, we may suppose, that the quality of the gold was at least twenty-three carats and a half.

The accounts of M. Pelays were given in a Memoir on the experiments made on the earths from the mines of Natakon and Semayla, addressed by the directors of the India Company, to the minister of finance in 1731.

In this Memoir, the directors observe, "that it is probable, if the experiment on the soil from the rivulet of Semayla had been made without antimony,

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instead of twenty-one grains of gold, the produce would have been nearly twenty-eight grains."

They justly suppose, that the mine of Semayla is intrinsically much richer than that of Natakon, and they express their most ardent wishes that they might be permitted to undertake some more important enterprise into the country of Bambouk.

But it appears that the right of possessing the gold mines being an appendage of royalty, the projects of the Company were opposed, and they were permitted only to examine the mines of Bambouk, and to draw from that country as much gold as they could by the way of negociation and commerce.

I shall terminate these details on the mines of Semayla, by observing, that none but women are employed in collecting the gold from the rivulet; they first dig a hole under the water with an iron instrument; this hole is shortly filled with a collection of matter, which they withdraw with their calabashes; the mixture is loaded with gold, which, after a slight washing, remains in considerable quantities at the bottom of the vessels.

The third mine of Bambouk is that of Nambia; it is situated at the back of the western chain of the mountains of Tabaoura. This mine is formed by a hill, and worked like the others, by the means of pits which they dig; at the foot of the hill runs likewise a rivulet, the waters of which convey gold sand, and its bed is very strongly impregnated with this metal.

The mine of Nambia is less known than Natakon and Semayla, because the negroes of this country are

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very reserved and mistrustful of strangers, and particularly of the whites.

There are many circumstances related of them, which prove that they are very jealous of their gold. This metal is as highly esteemed by the Europeans as that of Natakon and Semayla, and still more so by the negroes and negresses of Bambouk; it is paler, but much more ductile and malleable; the blacksmiths, who, as has already been observed, are goldsmiths, prefer the gold of Nambia, because they can manufacture it more easily into those ornaments with which the negresses decorate themselves.

It is said that the Moors of Zaara, who frequent the country of Bambouk, repair particularly to Nambia, either on account of the gold of this mine, being more acceptable to them, or that the salt which they convey thither sells at a higher price.

To the East of the Colea-Rio-D'oro, and not far from the Colez-Guyamon, in a valley formed by the eastern branch of the mountains of Tabaoura, is found the mine of Kombadyrie, from whence much gold is procured, though in less quantities than from the two principal mines; here likewise the mine is inclosed in a monticule, and its constituent soil is like that of Natakon, mixed with grains of iron, calculous and pulverized emery, loadstones, and ferruginous pyrites; all the substances are covered with gold, and particularly the pieces of emery, which contain it in small grains and spangles.

The branch of Kombadyrie rolls with its waters this metal, and its bed contains a considerable quantity.

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The method of working, and the police regulations, are the same here as in the other mines.

There are, without doubt, many other gold mines in the country of Bambouk; for we may frequently see, at Guingoulo, at Koba, at Koullo, at Koulou, at Hyeratonkonné, and in many other places situated to the West of the mountains of Tabaoura, different spots from whence the negroes procure gold.

The kingdom of Bondou, the eastern limits of which are watered by the Felemé, presents also many places whence gold is extracted; the quantity it is true is small; for the greater part of that which is used by the women of Bondou, to decorate themselves with, is procured from the Bamboukains, with whom this nation carries on a considerable commerce; nevertheless, it is a certain and an incontestible fact, that in this part of Africa, and over a surface of more than twelve hundred square leagues, gold is every where predominant in greater or less quantities.

The directors of the India Company, who were strongly persuaded of the great advantages which they might derive from the mines of Bambouk, cherished the hope that they should be able to obtain from the government the possession of them, together with a proper authority and adequate means for attaining the conquest of them; but the minister refused it, on the grounds that these gold mines could not enter into the grant made by the King to this Company; and if they were as rich as they appeared to be, the conquests of them ought to be made by the King, and the possession become an appendage of the royal domain.



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But whilst they were thus temporising and prevaricating, the company unceasingly kept their eyes fixt on Bambouk, and its delegates who were governors of the Senegal, lost no opportunity of procuring for their own advantage all the gold which they could.

In 1744, M. David had been some time in the name of the India Company, governor and director of the Senegal; this man was of a strong turn of mind, enterprising, and greedy of gold, though not from avarice, but merely to administer to his pleasures and expences; he was a spend-thrift, and died at Paris some ten or fifteen years ago, in a state far beneath mediocrity.

M. David, favoured more than any of his predecessors, the secret ambition of the India Company, with regard to the mines of Bambouk; he obtained permission to make a journey there; but it was not then known that there existed any other method of reaching it, except by the Senegal during the rainy season.

This tedious, painful, and even dangerous journey, occupied four months; and it was necessary to return immediately after the rains had subsided, because the waters then began to sink, and towards the middle of December, many parts of this river between Galam and Podhor are nearly dry.

Governor David, whose ostensible motive for this journey, was to survey the country of Bambouk, to examine the gold-mines, and to inspect the establishments at Podhor and Galam, had, however, formed a plan favourable to his personal interest, which was to procure on his own account, an immense quantity of



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gold. This undertaking, which was well arranged and perfectly prepared by him, met with complete success, and the acmé of his wishes were gratified.

He well knew all the different parts of his government, as well as the disposition of the various people, over whom the administration of the Senegal could exercise its influence; he knew that the Bamboukains were thoughtless, improvident, and easily persuaded to sell their necessaries of life.

The year 1744, was very dry in this part of Africa, and from its commencement it might be foreseen that the harvests would be bad; the East wind had prevailed with a pernicious continuance, from the month of November, 1743; the rains of this last year were trifling, and consequently the overflowings of the rivers, which fertilize the low lands of Bambouk, had been very inconsiderable; the harvests of rice, maize, beans, and pistachio peas, and that of millet, had, or would be, but indifferent, and the Bamboukains would hence find themselves barely possessed of a sufficient quantity of these grains to nourish themselves.

A scarcity was hence expected, and in fact took place. The governor's agents at Galam, with glass trinkets, amber, coral, and cornelian, succeeded in procuring from Bambouk, a great part of the grain, which was necessary for the support of the inhabitants, and the produce of this monopoly was stored in magazines at fort St. Joseph.

They next excited the Kasson negroes against the Bamboukains, and urged these savages to make irrup-

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tions in the countries of Bambouk, which were burnt, pillaged, and destroyed; and from the month of May, 1744, the inhabitants experienced all the dread of a famine.

While this plot was carried on at Galam, M. David monopolized all the millet, produced in the environs of isle St. Louis, and his magazines were stored with a quantity sufficient to load several vessels.

The negroes of Bambouk, who were oppressed with scarcity, demanded provisions at Galam, but were refused; the agents of M. David replied, that they must make their applications to the governor of the Senegal, whose magazines at St. Louis were filled with millet, and who could hence alone afford them any succour.

The kings of Bambouk immediately sent ambassadors overland to M. David, to implore him to sell them some millet; he was prepared for this event; he promised to assist the Bamboukains, and embarked at the Senegal the 11th of July, 1744, with a number of vessels laden with millet; on the 6th of September following, he arrived at Galam, where after much solicitation he sold his freight by the weight of gold, to the starving Bamboukains, who thought themselves happy in being able to purchase it at any price, which he thought proper to affix; for they had begun to feel all the miseries of famine.

This man saw all Bambouk at his feet, and remained seventy-one days at Galam and Kaignou, trafficking with the chiefs of the country for gold, in exchange for the provisions, &c. with which he furnished them; thus



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he accomplished his speculation, in the midst of the blessings of these simple and stupid people, who were unable to perceive that the famine which they had experienced, originated in the very man, who in their distress they had blessed as their saviour.

It is asserted, that this scheme produced five hundred thousand francs, of which the India Company had but a very small part; M. David retained for himself three hundred thousand of them, and the remainder was divided between the trusty agents of this governor.

As the apparent benefactor of Bambouk, he was sure of being well received there, and it is also equally certain, that if his avidity had not detained him so long at Galam and Kaignou, for the purpose of selling his commodities, he might have observed and examined at leisure, the whole of this rich country, and have formed there some permament establishments; but as personal interest alone induced him to undertake the journey, his visit to Bambouk was a mere mummery, and the short residence which he made was far from producing those advantages which it might have done.

We are now acquainted with M. David, a man corrupted by the love of gold, but who was gifted with the talents of an able governor, and who possessed a degree of military information and abilities, far superior to what might have been expected from an agent of a mercantile company, who had experienced but little practice in the trade of warfare.

I shall now give a summary of his journal of a voyage from Galam to Bambouk; it is one of those official and



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authentic documents which have been communicated to me. I shall not entirely extract this journal, of M. David, but in those passages which are here given, his own expressions are precisely retained, for I saw nothing in them which I wished to alter.

EXTRACT FROM THE JOURNAL OF M. DAVID, COMMANDER IN THE SERVICE OF THE SENEGAL COMPANY, GIVING AN ACCOUNT OF HIS VOYAGE TO GALAM.

"After having arranged all the inferior affairs of the company, I embarked on the Niger, the eleventh of July, 1744, taking with me only sixty men, including clerks, workmen, and soldiers, in order that I might not deprive the company of too many; I arrived at Galam the sixth of September, almost as much fatigued as my people, some of whom had fallen ill. I immediately entered on my business, with the chiefs of the country, whom I found divided and at war with each other; I endeavoured to conciliate them, but finding that impracticable, I resolved to profit by their squabbles.

"On the twenty-second of September, I ordered my vessels to proceed up the river, and to convey all our commodities to the island of Kaignou, in order to form there our first establishment. This port is no more than a league distant from the mine of Koulou, for the purpose of examining which I had come to this island: I made every necessary preparation, while waiting for



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the overflowing of the river, by which I should be enabled to proceed to the mine; I then quitted my people, in order not to lose time, and proceeded to fort St. Joseph, where I knew many deputies from the countries of Bambouk, and Bondou were already arrived, for the purpose of requesting me to inspect their mines. They were all desirous that I should go and work them, provided I would settle among them with some artillery, which would give them a greater importance, and render them respected by their neighbours; I yielded to their request, and we all proceeded together to Farbana, where the chiefs of the country were assembled; they granted to me every thing which I demanded, as necessary for working the mines.

"They conducted me to that of Hyeratonkonné, but previous to our arrival there we stopped at a mine about a league from Farbana, where some women whom I had taken the precaution to bring with me, took some earth which they simply diluted and stirred for a short time in a bowl; after which on pouring off the earth and water, there remained at the bottom an immense quantity of grains of pure gold, and spangles. I collected several of them, which weighed about three, four, or five grains.

"I do not think there can be found a mine, more rich and easy to work than this; the experiments which I saw were only made at the superficies, as we had no instruments with us proper for digging a pit, nor could we procure any near the spot. I was of opinion that this mine intersects a rivulet in the vicinity, for we

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found in its bed, the same quantity of gold, as that procured at a small distance from its banks.

"Night suddenly came on, and I was prevented from making further observations on the soil taken from both sides of the rivulet.

"I observed that the whole of this country was cultivated; and I was informed that the inhabitants were not necessitated to bestow much labour in its cultivation.

"On the 20th of November, I departed for the mountains of Tabaoura, and on the 22d I arrived at the mines of Natakon. I was obliged to dismount from my horse, and to proceed on foot up the hillock which contains the mines; I saw a number of pits which had been excavated by the natives, and from which they annually procured a quantity of gold.

"They were not at work at this time, because of the bad weather. I took some earth from several of these pits promiscuously for the purpose of examining it, and had it carried to Dandana, where I gave it to the washing women who found gold every where intermingled.

"From this first mountain I proceeded to others, where I saw similar excavations; I asked the negroes, who had come thither for the purpose of seeing me, if they ever found pieces of gold of several ounces in weight. I informed them I would willingly give a hundred and fifty crowns for every piece which they would procure me of the size of my thumb; to which they replied, that however rich I might be, I should be ruined, if I kept my word while they were working these mines.

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"I afterwards asked, if any of them had preserved some large pieces; but they told me that I could not easily procure any, because during the time of working the pits, the gold that was found was daily melted down, in order to discover whether it is pure or mixed, immediately after which the blacksmiths made it all into ear-rings. These blacksmiths are likewise the goldsmiths of the country; the only implements they possess are an earthern chafing dish, a pair of bellows, and a large and small hammer; with their small hammer they work the gold in a cold state, and make it into trinkets at once delicate and surprising. I was more inclined to believe this report, because all the gold bartered in the country, is always in ear-rings, or in ornaments, like those worn by the negroes.

The number of mines which I had already seen, induced me to neglect visiting others in this canton equally rich; but more particularly because I was desirous of having sufficient time, to examine those along the river of Felema. I was proceeding on my journey with this intention when I received a dispatch from fort St. Joseph, to inform me that the waters of the Niger, having sunk considerably all at once, they had been obliged to send off all the boats to the island of St. Louis, that my canoe had followed them, and that if I did not hasten my departure, I should run the risk of losing it. I therefore returned immediately to Farbana, where I pointed out to the persons, whom I wished to leave behind, the site of a fort; I ordered them to build huts, and to wait till cannon was sent to them, and a greater number of people from fort St. Joseph.

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"I recommended to the chiefs of the country the little troop I left behind, and quitting them, I proceeded with much difficulty to my canoe, which I should not have been able to overtake, had I remained a few hours longer behind. I immediately embarked, and arrived in the Senegal, on the fifth of December. Shortly after, I received a dispatch from Kaignou, by which had been sent me, some earth from the mine of Koulon, but the courier had been robbed of it in his journey, by some vagabond and wandering negroes. I afterwards received further intelligence from this establishment by which they informed me, that on the first opening of the mine, there were found at a depth of six feet, veins of a metal precisely the colour of gold.

"The chief of the factory wrote me word that if it was gold there never was, since the creation of the world, a mine discovered in which this metal was more abundant; this however I can confidently assert, that there is no copper in the country in question, and that all the experiments hitherto made with the soil taken from the surface of this mine, have constantly afforded more or less gold."

Such are literally the words of M. David, whose residence in the most interesting part of the country of Bambouk, and particularly in the kingdom of this name, did not occupy many days.

There is something obscure and ambiguous in the style of his journal, which may be attributed to the embarrassment arising from his endeavors to deceive his superiors, with regard to the real circumstances of

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his conduct; but it may safely be concluded from this journey, that not only the country of Bambouk, but all the countries watered by the Colez-Rio-d'oro, the Colez-Guyamon, and the river of Felema, produce quantities of gold.

All the gold mines in these countries, are in the possession of the blacks, who alone work them; but their operations are so extremely imperfect, that if we only consider this partial system, and pass over the real gold mines which must necessarily be contained in the bowels of the mountains of Tabaoura, it is probable that this country, worked superficially by European miners would produce four times as much gold as is now obtained, by the immethodical and unscientific process of the negroes.

Is it not hence almost incontestible, that the four principal mines of Natakon, Semayla, Nambia and Kombadyrie, ought to be considered as alluvion mines, or as masses produced by the emanations from four principal foci.

I shall leave it to mineralogists to draw their own inferences which their scientific knowledge may suggest, and from the description I have given of the country mines of Bambouk; I shall merely insist upon the fact, that this country of Africa, contains a quantity of gold, and that it doubtless possesses some mines of it, far more valuable than those which have hitherto been explored.

In 1786, I caused a trade to be carried on for gold at Galam, and I remitted to my agent there, merchandize to the value of three hundred francs; they consisted

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of very fine yellow amber, coral, agate and cornelian, and I received in return, gold to the value of five hundred francs after my agent had deducted his profits of commission; but he had procured gold on his private account, at a profit of two hundred per cent. I had however, no occasion to complain, for he made a long and dangerous journey to Galam, and returned extremely ill.

All the gold which I received was made into ear-rings, and other ornaments. I had it assayed at Paris in 1788, and it was, according to the account of the assayer, twenty-three carats fine. I sold it at the rate of twelve francs per drachm: and a gold ear-ring from the mine of Natakon, in the form of a heart, of three inches in length, weighing more than seven grains of fine coloured gold, was examined by M. Sage, professor of mineralogy, and one of the directors of the mint, and discovered it to be gold of the purest quality.

The country of Bambouk also contains many iron mines, of a very ductile and malleable quality; it is sonorous like silver, which may induce us to suppose, that if it were analyzed, this metal would be found in it. The Bamboukains fuse this metal and have it in daily use.

It may therefore be said, that all this wealth remains buried in the earth, owing at once, to the inexperience of the blacks, and to the folly, ignorance, and superstition, which prevail in their bungling operations.

It has been seen that the loadstone is found in Bambouk, and that emery is also procured there in abundance.

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Some mineralogists pretend, that platina is not a metal, but merely a metallic combination. Mercury, iron, and gold, may however be procured from it.

Platina, when combined with metallic substances, produces some remarkable changes in their colour, as well as in their texture and solidity; many suppose that platina is a kind of emery, containing gold; but the combination of which is effected by a medium hitherto unknown.

The mines of Natakon, are in particular characterized by a great abundance of calculous and pulverized emery, sometimes of a remarkable size, and always containing gold. I therefore think, that if the gold mines of the countries of Bambouk, are one day visited and examined by able mineralogists, there will be found some platina.

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## ON THE PLANS WHICH FRANCE MIGHT FORM AND EXECUTE RELATIVE TO THE COUNTRY OF BAMBOUK.

### FIRST PLAN.

Three plans might be formed relative to the mines of Bambouk.

First, that of conquering the three kingdoms into which this country is divided; this done, we should of course be in possession of the gold mines, which we might work according to the usual processes, and might make some researches relative to the real mines of which those worked by the negroes are merely emana-

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tions. Every thing promises that these undiscovered mines, which are hid in the bowels and bases of the mountains of Tabaoura, would be very rich, and their discovery and consequent working, would be productive of the greatest advantages.

The conquest of Bambouk is a thing which might be very easily done, if previously to its being undertaken, our measures are well combined, and vigorously conducted.

A small army of five hundred, regularly disciplined men, commanded by a prudent, wise, and resolute general, four field pieces, and some swivels, would be more than sufficient to subjugate the whole country of Bambouk.

But let us examine where such an expedition could be formed; where the necessary preparations for it could be made; and from what quarter it could be dispatched?

Since the abolition of the slave trade, we have doubtless abandoned the establishment at Galam; the fort of St. Joseph exists no longer; and we have no factory on the river of Felema, nor any post along the whole of the Senegal, from Podhor, as far as the rock or cataract of Felow.

Shall we re-establish ourselves at Galam, at Kaignou, or on the Felema? Shall we form some intermediate posts between Podhor and Galam? Should all the preparations for executing and succeeding in such an enterprize be concentrated at the isle St. Louis of the Senegal.



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When we consider, in its full extent, all that these preliminary measures will require, both of money and time, before this small army can commence its operations; when we reflect that, if we would conduct them to the mouth of the Felema and Kaignou by way of the Senegal, it will require a flotilla of at least twenty-five vessels; that they cannot navigate the Senegal, except during the rainy season, which is at the same time most abundant in diseases; that this voyage cannot be made, but by means of towing; that is, the vessels must be drawn by ropes, in order to stem the current of the river, which is then at its height; that each vessel will require fifteen of those negroes, which are denominated in this country Laptots, and whose office it is to drag the vessels and boats which proceed up the Senegal during the rainy season; that this indispensible appendage will augment the number of men to each vessel, and the whole armament will thus become double; that the voyage from the isle St. Louis, to Galam, will inevitably require, for the fastest sailing vessel, fifty-seven days at least, even should it be favoured by every possible advantageous circumstance; and that a flotilla of twenty-five vessels, conveying to Galam the small army destined to conquer the country of Bambouk will indubitably occupy, in this journey, at least, seventy-five days; when all these circumstances are considered, it will easily be conceived, how many inconveniences will attend such an expedition. But it is not the enormous expences, nor the numerous embarrassments, nor the length of time required, nor the complexity of the numerous measures conse-

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quential upon a voyage to Galam by the river of the Senegal, which militate most against the success of such an enterprize; it is the dangers to which the health and life of those are exposed, who perform this journey during the bad season; while unfortunately this period of the year (which, as has already been observed, is that of the tropical rains, and of the overflowing of the river) is the only one when the Senegal can be navigated in all its extent by the flotilla.

It is known by every person who has resided in the Senegal, that nearly half of the Europeans, who annually proceed to Galam for the purpose of trafficking with the negroes in gold and elephant's teeth, either perish by illness during the voyage, or arrive in a faint and emaciated state. Even the negroes themselves, though accustomed from their very birth to these burning climates, are unable to withstand the unwholesome qualities of the air of the Senegal, which is almost always heavy, suffocating, and stagnant, in the whole extent between Podhor and Galam, which, from the sinuosities of the river, comprizes a distance of nearly two hundred leagues.

Putrid dysenteries, and malignant nervous fevers, are the two principal diseases to which Europeans are exposed during this long and painful passage; they are almost always mortal; or if a few people should escape them, they arrive at Galam in a feeble, miserable, and emaciated state; it is generally more than a twelvemonth before they convalesce, which is itself a dangerous disease, for the slightest imprudence committed during it would be attended with death.



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I resided at the isle St. Louis during the bad season of 1786, and there saw the fleet of Galam set off and return. This year was very unhealthy; and according to the most faithful calculation, not only one-third of the whites perished during the voyage, but many negroes also fell victims.

M. D'Ernerville, a captain in the African batallion, and commander of the flotilla, and M. L'Amiral, a merchant of isle St. Louis, both of whom had been inured to the climate by six years residence in Africa, and had made this voyage many times, were unable to escape this malignant nervous fever; they did not, it is true, sink beneath it, but their convalescence was painful and tedious, and five months after their return, their health was far from being re-established.

What then would become of the small army destined to conquer Bambouk, if they were conveyed to Felema by way of the Senegal? One part of them would perish in the passage, and those who might remain would nearly all of them arrive diseased, feeble, and languid, they would be discouraged and disgusted, and little calculated to execute the enterprize.

We must not therefore think of conveying an army to Bambouk by the way of the Senegal; they must proceed by land. It is not more than one hundred and fifty direct leagues, from the borders of the Atlantic ocean to the village of Nayhe-Mow, situated at the mouth of the Colez-Rio-D'oro, in the Felema. The circuitous track, which must be followed to arrive at Felema, is not very considerable, and would not augment the distance more than thirty leagues; hence the

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total extent will not be at the most more than a hundred and eighty leagues.

But from reasons which it would be useless here to mention, the point where the army might collect and embark, might be arranged in such a manner, as to reduce the rout to a hundred and fifty leagues, or twenty-two days march; and by granting a rest every three days, the army might arrive in twenty five days at the Felema.

The most difficult and embarrassing part of the whole would be, to convey the baggage, ammunition, and provisions; though with regard to the last-mentioned, and the water, it may be remarked, that the army, during eight days of the march, would pass through well peopled and fertile countries, and where a degree of civilization prevails.

The kingdom of Burb-I-Iolof, which is a title similar to that of the emperor of the Iolofs, though not so populous as the kingdoms of Cayor and Bondou, is nevertheless so far inhabited, as that the villages are not very far distant from each other.

Some preliminary negociations made with the Damel and Burb-I-Iolof, would obviate a great part of the difficulty attendant upon exporting the provisions and water; and I am persuaded, that the army might perform its march, and yet carry with it provisions and water for no longer time than fifteen days.

It may be calculated, that they will consume twelve hundred pints per day; it therefore follows, that for



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fifteen days they must be provided with a supply of eighteen thousand pints.

A camel will easily carry four cubic feet of water, or a hundred and forty-four pints, Paris measure. A hundred and twenty-four camels would therefore be sufficient to carry this indispensible supply, which I, however, think to be highly exaggerated.

Forty camels would be able to convey the provisions. Hence including all the other indispensible articles, I am of opinion, that two hundred camels would be sufficient for providing this army with all its necessaries; but if three hundred of these animals were required, the Moors of Zaara, in the vicinity of the Senegal, would furnish them.

A small army, like that which I have mentioned, might perform its journey without any obstacle, and without sustaining a single action; for the black nations of western Africa are unable to withstand the fire of our artillery and musquetry; and I am confident, that six hundred Frenchmen, in battle array, would drive before them fifty thousand blacks; but it would be of greater advantage to us, to negociate and trade, on friendly terms, as far as the confines of Bambouk, whither we might arrive easily by a firm, prudent, and affable conduct.

It has been seen how weak and pusillanimous the Bamboukains are, and how few dangers would attend the conquest of their country. There would in fact be no resistance; but when conquered, it would doubtless be difficult to maintain ourselves there, and to form

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permanent establishments. We should have to guard against treason, to struggle with the unhealthiness of a burning climate, and in short to stand firm against all the consequences of indolence, debauchery, and every species of corruption; for these would be the greatest enemies we should have in Bambouk, and these alone would be able to conquer and destroy us.

It may be necessary here to observe, that the country of Bambouk is situated between the two rivers of Senegal and Gambia, and nearly equi-distant; the French habitually proceed up the Senegal, as far as the rock Felow, and the English frequent the Gambia beyond Pisania, which is nearly under the same parallel.

Is it not therefore astonishing, that the gold mines of Bambouk, exposed as they are to the enterprizes of the French and English, two of the most avaricious nations with regard to gold, and at the same time the most ambitious, should have remained so long uninvaded by either one or the other?

This circumstance has induced me to believe, that, though it may be easy to invade the country of Bambouk, it would not be so easy to establish ourselves there; and that the possession of this rich country is attended with great difficulties, either arising from its local situation, from the character of the inhabitants, or from the dangers of the climate; hence the conquest of it must not be undertaken by France in a superficial or inconsiderate manner; for though she may invade it, she will find it no small difficulty to remain in absolute possession of it.

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SECOND PLAN.

The second plan might have for its object, to obtain by negociation the liberty of working the gold mines for our own advantage, and of discovering those which yet remain concealed.

It would require much address and skill, to induce the Bamboukains to permit us to work their mines. I have already noticed how far they are jealous of this metal, and their great distrust of the whites; it is also probable that superstition would be another obstacle difficult to overcome. The intrigues and insinuations of the English of the Gambia, might likewise go against us in this project, which I consider as impossible to succeed unless our preparations are made with great foresight and attention.

It appears to me, that the only way of inducing the reserved and jealous Bamboukains to suffer us to work their gold mines, would be by means of well-formed alliances in the country; we might then traffic with them for it in exchange for merchandises, and articles indispensable to them, and which under certain conditions would be advantageous to them; particularly by leaving in their possession the same quantity of gold, which is annually employed in ornaments for decorating their women. This second project is therefore subordinate to the third, and ought to be dependent on it.

THIRD PLAN.

The third plan is that of organising a very active, unremitting, and well-arranged commerce with the three

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kingdoms of Bambouk, and of procuring by this means, all the gold produced by the mines, rivers, and rivulets; it is that of trading with them in a direct manner for their gold; and by exchanges to induce them to bring us all that they annually dispose of, and which passes among the Moors, the negroes of Bondou, the Serrawallis negroes, and the Mandings.

Besides the gold, the country of Bambouk affords us wax, and the rough hides of oxen, cows, and kids; emery, butter of kharite, which is produced by a palm tree, and the lubrications of which are esteemed very beneficial in the cure of rheumatisms. By encouraging agriculture likewise in this country, it would probably in a short time produce a number of other valuable and useful articles. In the plan which I have formed for the execution of this third project, the commerce with the country of Bambouk might be carried on by means of caravans, and the following anecdote will serve to shew that the communication by land between the ocean and Felema is not attended by any inconveniences.

In 1785, M. Durand who was then director of the gum company established at isle St. Louis, being uneasy respecting a collection of slaves which he had been obliged to leave at Galam, in consequence of some particular circumstances, resolved to send thither one of his agents overland to ascertain the real situation of the company's affairs in this part of Africa.

A negro slave named Sieck, belonging to Catherine Tabara, a free negress inhabitant, and as they say, signare of the isle St. Louis, having many times made

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the same voyage, M. Durand chose the captive negro to accompany his agent, and to serve as his guide and interpreter.

This journey succeeded as well as M. Durand could expect; the account of it, is interesting, but I shall decline giving it in this place, because I know that M. Durand who is now in Paris, intends publishing it himself. I shall merely observe, that I have often questioned the negro Sieck on this terrestrial journey. I have also received the account of two other free negroes, who have made a similar perambulation; and it appears from these informations, that the travellers experienced no difficulty in passing through the states of Damel; that when they arrived at Cayor, the capital of that prince, they solicited his recommendation to the Burb-I-Iolof, whose country they must pass through to arrive at Galam; that Damel gave them one of his officers as an escort, and that in consequence, they arrived at the residence of the emperor of the Iolof's, in perfect safety. The Burb-I-Iolof also escorted the travellers as far as Galam; which escort received orders to cause them to be respected in all the villages through which they passed. The imperial delegate, received from his master an ivory wand, ornamented at each end with a knob of ebony; this wand was the sign of his mission and authority.

On shewing this wand, he was every where obeyed; and amongst the Foulhas, as well as the people of Bondou, this sign of the authority of the Burb-I-Iolof was respected; the travellers experienced no insult; the provisions they demanded and paid for were furnished,

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and they arrived at Galam without meeting with the slightest inconvenience.

I shall not here enter into all the details necessary for insuring the success of this third project; I must however state, that the attempt of the first year, would require sixty thousand livres at least.

It may, perhaps, be said, why lavish such certain expences, for uncertain advantages? To this objection we may reply, that since the regency of the Duke of Orleans in 1715, France has incessantly proceeded towards unbounded luxury; towards profligacy of manners, and a contempt for all the principles on which rest social order and happiness; that the revolution has greatly accelerated this fatal progression, and led us to the confines of corruption's dreadful abyss.

In this situation of France, however extensive, however excellent, and however rich and fertile her territory may be, can it be supposed that she will be contented to become a mere agricultural nation? In such a system, we might, perhaps, behold once again the virtuous, the noble and generous character of our ancestors, and true greatness, but can we hope for such a period?

France therefore must always be a maritime and commercial nation; she will re-build her navy, re-establish her rich colonies, and the government while labouring to improve the culture of our territory, will also seek to give our industry the widest possible range.

Western Africa to the North of the line, presents many advantages which should not be neglected; the branch of commerce which I propose to establish with the Bamboukains may be attended with the most



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important consequences ; and let us not regret the first expences incurred by the commencement of our endeavours, even should they be found unproductive of a proportionate return.

The prosperity of a great nation does not depend upon the addition of a trifling article in the register of public expenditure, even when this article is become superfluous, provided that its object was originally rational ; and the people who admit taxes, and who well know that in paying them, they only act for their own interest, will never vituperate an expence of some hundred thousand of francs, when its object is of manifest utility ; and this third plan relative to Bambouk, which is the only one I can recommend, might be carried into effect at a much smaller expence.

Though my principles are very distinct from granting an exclusive privilege to any person or persons, to carry on the commerce which might be established among the countries, comprised between Cape Blanco and Cape-Palmas, and although my opinion in this respect is well known to many French merchants; yet as far as it relates to Bambouk, where it would be proper to form very active arrangements with the inhabitants, I might be inclined to think those principles which I freely professed at a time, when such diplomas which are derogatory to the imprescriptable rights of general industry, were easily obtained, might be swerved from; but this could only happen, if the government would not make the attempts pointed out in this third plan. In that case, the exclusive trade of the country of Bambouk, might be granted for the space of ten years, by

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rendering the society, receiving the privilege, subject to the inspection of government, which should also undertake to protect it, and to afford conditions, which might ensure the entire freedom of trade, in all the other countries under the jurisdiction of the government of the Senegal. But a free and general commerce well organised and protected by government, would be productive of much greater advantages than any privilged commerce.

To this last plan therefore ought the government to direct its attention; and I am of opinion that no other ought to be attempted, before we have acquired considerable information relative to the country of Bambouk, which might be procured by those connections, necessarily resulting from an active commerce with this rich and fertile country; if after long continued trials for several years, experience should prove that any attempt relative to Bambouk, would never be advantageous to France, we might abandon all ideas hitherto formed, of conquering this country, of the possession of its gold mines, or of the possibility of working them; we might then renounce the trade by the caravans, and confine ourselves to trading for the gold as heretofore, along the course of the Senegal and on the coasts belonging to the government, which bears the name of this river.

I have endeavoured to describe the country of Bambouk, its gold mines, and the advantages which France might reap, from active and direct connections, with this country; which from its geographical situation, is so immediately beneath the government of the Senegal.



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I justly imagined, that I foresaw some important and valuable advantages, that might result from a continued commerce with this country, which would open to us a road towards the centre of a Continent, which has engrossed the attention of all those who interest themselves in the progress of human knowledge; and if, a fortunate success should be the consequence of what I have here proposed, I shall candidly felicitate myself on having indicated a new road for national industry, and discoveries in the central countries of Africa.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

W. Flint, Printer, Old Bailey.

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